

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID
FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA
Departamento de Filología Inglesa



**ANÁLISIS DE LAS FUNCIONES Y ESTRATEGIAS DEL
DISCURSO IRÓNICO**

**MEMORIA PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR
PRESENTADA POR**

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Bajo la dirección de la doctora

Angela Downing Rothwell

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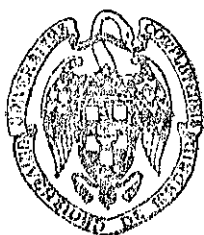


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UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE

***THE FUNCTIONS AND STRATEGIES
OF IRONIC DISCOURSE: AN ANALYSIS***

Tesis doctoral presentada por:

LAURA ALBA JUEZ



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TO MY HUSBAND, GUSTAVO, AND MY SON, JOAQUIN.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED

LLC: LONDON LUND CORPUS GG: THE GOLDEN GIRLS CORPUS
YM: YES, MINISTER CORPUS BR: BERTRAND RUSSELL CORPUS
NA: CORPUS CONTAINING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

NOTATION IN THE LONDON LUND CORPUS

A) PROSODY

End of tone group ^Yes Beginning of tone group

TONES:

Y\es	FALL	Y\/es	FALL-RISE	Y=es	LEVEL
Y/es	RISE	Y/\es	RISE-FALL		

PITCH:

:Yes Higher than the previous syllable

!Yes High !!Yes Very high

STRESS:

'Yes Normal "Yes Strong

PAUSES:

Yes - - Each dash is a unit pause of one stress unit or "foot".

Yes + Brief pause

B) SPEAKERS

A Speaker identity

(A) Speaker continues where he left off

A, B A and B

VAR Various speakers

? Speaker identity unknown

a (low case letter) Non-surreptitious speaker

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

<<"Do you mean that you think you can find the answer to it?" said the March Hare.
"Exactly so", said Alice.
"Then you should say what you mean?" The March Hare went on.
"I do." Alice hastily replied; "At least I mean what I say - That's the same thing, you know."
"Not the same thing a bit!" said the latter.>>

L. Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

<<So the ironist is negatively free; he is not bound by what he says; albeit he isn't exactly unbound by it.>>

D.J. Enright, *The Alluring Problem: An Essay on Irony*

1.1 Preliminary considerations

To do research on, or to study irony sooner or later becomes an ironic enterprise. For the more one analyses it, the less one knows about it or the less possible it is to "grasp" the concept and put it within a frame having clear and tidy boundaries. Notwithstanding, precisely this varied, multifarious and slippery nature of irony makes it a fascinating topic for research.

It would have been appropriate, perhaps, to start this dissertation by giving a clear-cut definition of irony so as to be able to work on firm ground from the very beginning, but I am

afraid this would have been quite a chimerical start. As Roy (1978) notes, irony versus nonirony is not a binary distinction but rather a continuum. There is general agreement among ironic experts on how difficult it is to define this phenomenon. Many scholars do not agree on the subclasses within the main class; for instance, some of them will include sarcasm as a type of irony and some others will not; or some of these scholars will state that ironic utterances can only convey derision while others will also include utterances conveying praise.

Barbe (1995) notes that the discovery of conversational irony is based on very personal judgements and that many prejudices exist about irony. She devotes a chapter entitled "But that's not ironic" precisely to this disagreement about the judgement of ironic utterances. This difference of opinions when judging irony may sometimes be due to a lack of knowledge about the contextual factors surrounding ironic utterances or to a prejudiced or casual appreciation of it. Kaufer (1981) describes the possible cause of disagreement as to what irony is in the paragraph below. I agree with him in that the more one studies the phenomenon, the more one realizes that traditional or standard definitions do not show the complete picture and, therefore, that there is more to irony than what the uninitiated appreciator may think:

<<As with most intellectual topics, verbal irony has received careful attention from a few scholars and only passing attention (if that) from everyone else. Unlike most such topics, there is surprisingly little by way of what is known about irony to distinguish the ironic "expert" from the casual appreciator of irony. Whereas the casual appreciator makes sense of the

concept by appealing to the authority of standard definitions, the ironic "expert" usually has been able to claim little more than these definitions don't work>> (1981: 495).

The view adopted in this study will try to embrace as many occurrences of the phenomenon as possible. This entails considering both: a) instances of verbally ironic language having been classified as such by the scholars that have studied verbal irony in a serious and systematic manner, and b) the instances found in the corpora that do not fit any classification done before but which nevertheless do fit the characterisation (see 8.2) made of it herein on the basis of all previous studies. Thus, I will include examples in my analysis which show various and different manifestations of the phenomenon in question.

The approach of this study can not be said to adopt a traditional perspective. As will be explained further on, I will focus on verbal irony (as opposed to situational irony or any other of the kinds described in chapter 2), and I will adopt a wider, discourse-pragmatic viewpoint.

Irony has been the subject of study of different disciplines: it is a topic much debated among philosophers and literary experts, though not so much debated among linguists. Other traditionally called "tropes" or "figures of speech" such as metaphor, for instance, have been much more studied and scrutinised by linguists than irony. That is one of the reasons why the present study was carried out. I started with the aim of finding out more concrete data and results concerning the different types of verbal irony a speaker may use and understand,

as well as the pragmatic strategies and discourse functions that ironic users of English have at their disposal. Since Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis are by nature multidisciplinary, and so is the phenomenon of irony, the theoretical frameworks behind this study are several and interrelated. Thus, the classical approaches to irony as well as the psychological and the pragmatic approaches have been useful. Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1978), Sperber and Wilson's Echoic Theory (1981, 1984) and Relevance Theory (1986), Jakobson's (1960) and Halliday's (1976, 1978, 1985) functional view of language, Brown and Yule's (1983) views on Discourse Analysis and several other studies which touch on the topic of verbal irony have also been insightful for the different qualitative and quantitative analyses that are carried out all throughout this piece of research.

Irony underlies extremely diverse intellectual mechanisms. It is a general aim of this study to try to clarify and explain -to a certain extent- these mechanisms and to give at least some steps forward in order to understand why utterances as diverse as the following are labelled and interpreted as ironic:

- * "I only know I know nothing." (Socrates)
- * "A fine friend you are!" (when, for example, the friend does not want to do a favour for the speaker)
- * So, they tell me you're a bad student! (said to a child who has just brought his report-card with very high grades)

- * Break a leg! (said by an actor to another actor, before starting a performance to wish him good luck)
- * Come on! Keep on eating with your hands! (said by a mother to her child when she wants him to use the fork or spoon)
- * A: My boyfriend is the best looking man on earth.
B: Yes, and I'm Mary the Queen of Romania. (said to mean that A's boyfriend is not goodlooking)

But these are only a few examples of how colourful and varied verbal irony may be. The examples found and analysed in the corpora used for this investigation will show us a greater number of possibilities.

Irony also plays an important part in the study of humour and indeed has much in common with it. Nash's (1985) characterization of humour in his book *The Language of Humour* could very well be applied to that of irony. He describes humour as:

<<A complex piece of equipment for living, a mode of attack and a line of defence, a method of raising questions and criticizing arguments, a protest against the inequality of the struggle to live, a way of atonement and reconciliation, a treaty with all that is willful, impaired, beyond our power to control.>>
(1985: 1)

Irony being such a versatile phenomenon, many research questions were raised, which became the basis for the further formulation of the objectives and hypotheses of this study. I shall now proceed to present the research questions and the hypotheses.

1.2 Research questions and hypotheses of this study

The first and the most general questions raised were the following:

How can verbal irony be better explained? What elements from the existing theories and from the pragmatic and discourse analysis approaches can help in the description and explanation of the phenomenon?

from which the main (general) hypothesis was derived:

Verbal irony is a complex phenomenon, which can not be explained in its totality by means of the existing theories. Its very essence lies in paradox and contradiction (which may be present at different levels); and the pragmatic concept of strategy, as well as the concept of discourse function, can help in its explanation and characterisation.

There are several other questions implicit in the main ones, which were made in the course of this investigation as it progressed in time and depth. From each of the questions, a research hypothesis was derived.

The qualitative and quantitative analyses made in the different chapters of this thesis will all be aimed at the testing of the different hypotheses. In most cases, a statistical test will also be carried out. I shall specify which test will be used when referring to each hypothesis.

The specific questions and hypotheses are the following:

-Research question n° 1:

Does a user of verbal irony always mean the opposite of the proposition expressed by the literal meaning of his/her utterance or contribution?

- Research hypothesis n° 1:

When being ironic, a speaker/writer does not always mean the opposite of the proposition expressed by the literal meaning of his/her utterance. Even more, the frequency of occurrence of the non-proposition oriented cases of verbal irony is greater than that of the proposition-oriented ones.

The statistical Median Test will be applied to the appropriate data in order to have solid foundations for the acceptance or rejection of this hypothesis. The results of the test will show whether the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented instances of irony is greater than that of the proposition-oriented counterpart.

- Research question n° 2:

Can verbal irony sometimes be conveyed by conventional implicature?. In other words, is there a conventional or conventionalised type of irony?

- Research hypothesis n° 2:

Verbal irony can be conveyed not only through conversational implicature, but also through conventional implicature. There exists a type of irony that can be said to be "implicature-free" (i.e., not conveyed by means of conversational implicatures), and another type which can be called the "conventionalised" type (in which the implicature has been short-circuited).

If the data allows for the acceptance of the existence of these three types of irony (conversational, conventionalised and implicature-free), the Chi-squared test (χ^2) will be applied in order to see if there are significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of these three types of verbal irony, and to compare the relative frequencies of each of the types.

- Research question n° 3:

Can verbal irony manifest itself at the illocutionary level of the speech act, through all types of speech acts, including those of the declarative type?

- Research hypothesis n° 3:

Verbal irony manifests itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech act, and it can even be expressed through declarative (performative) speech acts. There is, therefore, a speech act-oriented type of verbal irony.

The statistical analysis (x2 test) will tell us whether the occurrence of the speech act-oriented type of irony is more or less frequent than the non-speech act-oriented counterpart, as well as whether the frequencies of occurrence of these two types vary from the spoken corpora to the written one.

- Research question n° 4:

Are all ironic utterances instances of echoic mention or interpretation?

- Research hypothesis n° 4:

Not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention or interpretation. There is an echoic and a non-echoic type of verbal irony, and the frequency of occurrence of these two types is different for the different corpora analysed.

The statistical test of the Chi Square (x2) will be carried out in order to accept or reject this hypothesis, as well as to compare the frequencies of occurrence for both the spoken and the written corpora.

- Research question n° 5:

Do all instances of ironic discourse convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer?

- Research hypothesis n° 5:

Not all instances of ironic discourse convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer. The Negative type of verbal irony does convey such an attitude, but there are also two other main kinds of irony, namely, Positive and Neutral, in which the attitude of the user of irony is not derogatory at all.

As with all the other hypotheses, the qualitative and quantitative analyses will try to give evidence for this hypothesis. In this particular case, the Kruskal Wallis Test will be carried out in order to find out whether there are significant differences in the frequencies of occurrence of these three types of verbal irony.

- Research question n° 6:

Are all ironic utterances instances of pretence?

- Research Hypothesis n° 6:

Not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence. Even more, the frequency of occurrence of the non-pretence instances of verbal irony is higher than the frequency of occurrence of the pretence ones.

The chi-squared test will be applied for the acceptance or rejection of this hypothesis.

- Research question n° 7:

Can the ironic speakers/writers violate all the Maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle?

- Research hypothesis n° 7:

An ironic speaker/writer can not only violate the Quantity Maxim, but also the other three Gricean Maxims.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis will be considered

enough for the acceptance of this hypothesis (see chapter 7).

- Research question n° 8:

Can an ironic speaker/writer make use of both off record and on record strategies (as described by Brown & Levinson, 1978) to make his/her point?

- Research hypothesis n° 8:

An ironic speaker/writer can make use not only of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make his point. The frequency of occurrence of the former strategies is higher than that of the latter, but this does not deny the existence of the latter.

The chi-squared test will be applied to the pertinent data to find out if the frequencies of occurrence of these two variables (on record and off record) is similar or different for the different corpora analysed.

- Research question n° 9:

Can a speaker/writer make different off record strategies co-occur in order to convey an ironic meaning?

- Research hypothesis n° 9:

A speaker/writer can make different off record strategies co-occur in order to convey an ironic meaning

No statistical tests will be carried out here.

- Research question n° 10:

Do the sociological variables P (power), D (distance) and R (ranking of imposition of the culture) have any influence upon the use of verbal irony?

- Research hypothesis n° 10:

The sociological variables P, D and R influence the use of verbal irony.

This hypothesis is the only one that will not be analysed quantitatively. Qualitative evidence for its acceptance will be given in Chapter 5 (5.5), but its quantitative analysis is considered to be beyond the scope of this study.

- Research question n° 11:

Is there a specific tone (fall, rise, etc.) used exclusively in ironic utterances? What other prosodic features intervene in the so-called "ironic tone of voice"?

- Research hypothesis n° 11:

There is no specific tone used exclusively for ironic utterances. Nevertheless, the frequency of use of the different tones within ironic discourse is different from the frequency of use of these tones in non-ironic discourse. Intonation and other prosodic features (such as pitch level, laughter, etc.) work together to conform the so-called "ironic tone of voice" and the use of these features constitutes only one more of the possible strategies ironic speakers have at their disposal.

The chi-squared test will be applied here for the comparison between ironic and non-ironic discourse.

- Research question n° 12:

What are the strategies used by ironic speakers/writers?

- Research hypothesis n° 12:

Verbal irony is a super-strategy which is subdivided in three main kinds (Positive, Negative and Neutral), which in turn can be carried out by using different pragmatic sub-strategies such as "joke", "use the opposite proposition to the one intended", "use a different speech-act from the one intended", "echo someone's previous utterance or thought", etc..

The chi-squared test will be carried out in order to find out whether or not there are significant differences in the

frequencies of occurrence of the different strategies for the different corpora.

- Research question n° 13:

What are the functions of verbal irony?

- Research hypothesis n° 13:

Speakers/writers of English use verbal irony in order to fulfill the main functions of EVALUATION, VERBAL ATTACK and/or AMUSEMENT. Other more specific discourse functions may be fulfilled at the same time, such as "Topic closure", "Topic conclusion", "Reproach", "Complaint", etc.

The chi-squared and Kruskal-Wallis tests will be applied to the numerical data obtained, in order to find out whether the frequencies of occurrence of both the general and the specific functions vary for the different corpora analysed, as well as for the spoken and the written corpora.

Each of the chapters in this study intends to give an answer to one or more of the above questions and to test one or more of the hypotheses in both a qualitative and a quantitative manner. The only hypothesis that has not been tested quantitatively is Research hypothesis n° 10, for, as was noted above and will be explained in chapter 5, it was thought to be beyond the scope of this work (the qualitative analysis of several examples from the corpora used in this piece of research was considered sufficient to show some of the ways in which the sociological variables may influence the use of verbal irony).

Both the research questions and hypotheses are closely

related to the objectives of this study, to which I now turn.

1.3 Objectives of this study

The general aim or objective of this study is to make a corpus-based analysis of the phenomenon of verbal irony, in order to identify its possible modes of occurrence as well as to classify the pragmatic strategies and discourse functions used by irony users. The specific objectives, which have to do with the specific questions and hypotheses put forward in 1.2, are the following:

A) To determine:

- 1- whether or not it is always the case (as traditional theories put it) that an ironic writer/speaker conveys the opposite of the literal meaning of his/her proposition;
- 2- whether or not verbal irony can also be conveyed through conventional implicature and not only through conversational implicature;
- 3- whether or not verbal irony can manifest itself at the illocutionary level of the speech act, and, if so, through what type of speech acts;
- 4- whether or not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention or interpretation;
- 5- whether or not all instances of verbal irony convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer;
- 6- whether or not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence;

- 7- whether or not ironic speakers/writers can violate not only the Gricean Maxim of Quality but also the Maxims of Manner, Quantity and Relevance;
- 8- whether or not an ironic speaker/writer can make the different off record strategies co-occur in order to make his/her point;
- 9- whether or not the sociological variables P, D and R have any influence upon the use of verbal irony;
- 10- whether or not there is a specific tone characteristic of ironic utterances, whether or not the frequencies of occurrence of the different tones are different if both the ironic and the non-ironic types of discourse are compared, and what other prosodic features may co-occur with intonation to produce the so-called "ironic tone of voice";

B) to provide:

- 1- a taxonomy or classification of the pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers of English;
- 2- a typology or classification of the discourse functions of verbal irony;

C) to make a quantitative analysis of:

- 1- the occurrence of the different prosodic features and their possibilities of combination in the pieces of ironic discourse found in the corpora used for the analysis;
- 2- the frequencies of occurrence of the different types of verbal irony resulting from the corpus analysis of the phenomenon in the light of the different theories approaching the problem;

3- the frequencies of occurrence of the different strategies identified and classified in the corpora analysed, as well as an analysis of their possibilities of combination;

4- the occurrence of the different discourse functions identified in the ironic instances found in the corpora used for this study.

1.4 Research method and corpora used for the analysis

Any kind of research or systematic process of inquiry consists of three components: 1) a question, problem, or hypothesis; 2) data and 3) analysis and interpretation of data (Nunan, 1992:3). I have already presented the questions and the hypotheses. I shall now refer to the second component of research, namely, the data.

1.4.1 Data

The data used for the analysis in this study consists of five different corpora of the English language. Three of them contain spoken language and two of them written language. These five corpora are the following: 1) the *London Lund Corpus of English Conversation* (Svartvik and Quirk, 1980), 2) ten episodes of *The Golden Girls* television series, 3) five episodes of the *"Yes, Minister"* television series, 4) a book containing excerpts from Bertrand Russell's works, and 5) a collection of newspaper articles published in different American and British newspapers. I shall refer to each of them separately:

1) LONDON LUND CORPUS: This corpus is a computerised corpus of English, and it consists of 87 texts, each of 500 words (approximately). These texts are arranged in text groups, namely, a) face-to-face conversation, b) telephone conversation, c) discussion, interview, debate, c) discussion, interview, debate, d) public, unprepared commentary, demonstration, oration, and 5) public, prepared oration (priests' sermons and mass). Most of the texts contain "subtexts" in them; for instance, one text labelled "telephone conversation" may include two, three or more different telephone conversations in it. For the analysis carried out herein, twenty of the 87 texts were chosen on a random basis. These texts contain 64 subtexts. Of these, 35 are private telephone conversations, 19 are face-to-face conversations, 5 are instances of radio discussion, debate, interview or sports comment, 4 are instances of "public, prepared oration" and one of them contains legal discourse (public, unprepared legal discourse). All these texts were examined for examples of ironic discourse and 86 instances of verbal irony were identified, all of which have been used as variables in the analysis. Following is more detailed information about the texts (with the subtexts they contain) as well as about the speakers and year of recording. This information is not available for some of the texts, and this is one of the problems researchers encounter when working with the London Lund Corpus: there is not enough information about the speakers and the relationships among them. Furthermore (and this will be better explained in chapter 6), there are some prosodic features that have been omitted (a

fact that hindered part of the prosodic analysis in this study).

Data about speakers in the London Lund Corpus (LLC)

The speakers are all British, and educated to University level. Recording was surreptitious.

Non-surreptitious speakers have been specially designated by lower case letters.

TEXT S.1.1 (1964) Face-to-face conversation

A: male academic, age c. 44 B: male academic, age c. 60

TEXT S.1.2 (1963) Face-to-face conversation

A: male academic, age c. 43 B: male academic, age c. 42

S.1.2.a (1965)

A: male academic, age c. 45 B: male academic, age 41 CAL: telephone caller

S.1.2.b (1965)

A: male academic, age 45 B: male academic, age 36

TEXT S.1.4 (1969) Face-to-face conversation

A: male academic, age c. 48 B: male academic, age c. 48

TEXT S.1.5 (1967) Face-to-face conversation

A: female secretary, age c. 21 B: female academic, age c. 25 C: female secretary, age c. 35

D: female secretary, age c. 21

TEXT S.1.6 (1964) Face-to-face conversation

A: female academic, age 45 B: male academic, age 28

TEXT S.1.8 (1969) Face-to-face conversation

A: female academic, age c. 55 B: female academic, age c. 50 C: female academic, age c. 23

TEXT S.2.1 (1963) Face-to-face conversation

A: male academic, age 43 B: male academic, age 34

S.2.1.a (1953)

a: male academic, age 43 B: male academic, age 25

S.2.1.b (1953)

a: male academic, age 33 B: male academic, age 25

TEXT S.3.1 (1970) Face-to-face conversation

S.3.1.a (1970)

a: male academic, age 40 A: female prospective undergraduate, age 20 B: male academic, age 40

S.3.1.b (1970)

a: male academic, age 40 A: female prospective undergraduate, age 20 B: male academic, age 40

TEXT S.3.2 Face-to-face conversation

S.3.2.a (1973)

A: male academic, age c. 52 B: female ex-research assistant, age c. 30

S.3.2.b (1974)

A: male academic (former employer), age 54 B: male academic, (former employee), age 28

S.3.2.c (1975)

A: male academic, age c. 50

B: female academic, age c. 30

TEXT S.3.3 (1971) Face-to-face conversation

A: male administrator, age c. 55 B: (BH) male undergraduate student, age c. 20

C: (CF) female undergraduate student, age c. 20 D: (DM) male undergraduate student, age c. 20

E: (EF) female undergraduate student, age c. 20 F: (GN) male undergraduate student, age c. 20

TEXT S.3.4 (1975) Face-to-face conversation

A: male administrator, age c. 55 B: male academic, age 45-60 C: male academic, age 45-60

D: male academic, age 45-60 E: male academic, age 45-60 F: male academic, age 45-60

TEXT S.4.1 Face-to-face conversation

a & b = a couple (No more information about the speakers is given)

TEXT S.5.1 Discussion, interview, debate, radio (face-to-face)

(No information about the speakers is provided)

TEXT S.6.1 Discussion, interview, debate, radio (face-to-face)

S.6.1.a

S.6.1.b

S.6.1.c

TEXT S.7.1 Telephone conversation (dialogue, private, surreptitious)

S.7.1.a b: male C: female

S.7.1.b

S.7.1.c (No information about the speakers is provided)

S.7.1.d

S.7.1.e

TEXT S.8.1 Telephone conversation

S.8.1.a A: female B: male

S.8.1.b A: male B: female

S.8.1.c A: secretary B: secretary C: female assistant

S.8.1.d

S.8.1.e

S.8.1.e (No information provided)

S.8.1.f

S.8.1.g

S.8.1.h B: female secretary C: female secretary

S.8.1.i

S.8.1.j

S.8.1.k

S.8.1.l (No information provided)

S.8.1.m

S.8.1.n

S.8.1.o

S.8.1.p C: male B: male doctor

TEXT S.9.1 Telephone conversation

S.9.1.a

S.9.1.b (No information provided)

S.9.1.c

S.9.1.d

S.9.1.e
 S.9.1.f
 S.9.1.g
 S.9.1.h (No information provided)
 S.9.1.i
 S.9.1.j
 S.9.1.k
 S.9.1.l
 S.9.1.m
 S.9.1.n

TEXT S.10.1 Public, unprepared commentary, demonstration, (sports comment), dialogue face-to-face

TEXT S.11.1 Public, unprepared commentary, demonstration, oration . A trial (legal discourse)

TEXT S.12.1 Public, prepared oration (face-to-face) . Monologue: priest's sermon in church

S.12.1.a
 S.12.1.b
 S.12.1.c
 S.12.1.d

2) THE GOLDEN GIRLS TELEVISION EPISODES and

3) THE "YES, MINISTER" TELEVISION EPISODES: These television programmes were chosen considering that they seemed to include various examples and different forms of verbal irony. Indeed, numerous examples of the phenomenon under study were found, of which 84 in *The Golden Girls* (hereinafter GG) and 55 in *"Yes Minister"* (hereinafter YM) were randomly selected for the analysis. The speakers and main characters in the GG corpus are generally the "girls", namely, four women of mature age. Three of them, Dorothy, Blanche and Rose, are aged approximately 50 to 60, and Sophia (Dorothy's mother) is about 80 years of age. They all live in the same house, and they have a strong friendship relationship. Other characters ,who vary depending on the episode, may participate in the dialogues.

The speakers and main characters of the YM series are Hacker (the Minister of Administrative affairs), Humphrey (Hacker's secretary), Bernard (another secretary or assistant to

the Minister) and Hacker's wife. As in GG, other characters may participate depending on the episode.

4) BERTRAND RUSSELL'S WORKS: It was considered necessary to analyse verbal irony not only in its spoken manifestation but also in its written one. Therefore, and taking into account that B. Russell's argumentative prose is very rich in witty, pungent and sometimes humorous language, one of his books containing the most important parts of all his works (*Russell's Best*, 1958) was chosen to look for examples of verbal irony. Again, numerous instances of the phenomenon were identified, of which 46 were randomly selected. This corpus will hereinafter be referred to as BR.

5) THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: As a complement to B. Russell's works, 80 more instances of written ironic discourse were also included in the repertoire for the analysis. The articles were taken from a newspaper called "The English Press", which re-publishes articles that have been published in different English and/or American newspapers such as "The Spectator", "Time", "The Guardian", etc.. Once more, the examples were numerous, and a random selection had to be made. This corpus will hereinafter be referred to as NA.

As can be seen, the data sources for this investigation are varied and contain a total of 351 instances of ironic discourse, all of which were considered as variables in both the

quantitative and qualitative analysis made in the different chapters of this thesis, with the exception of chapter 6, where only the LLC corpus was used, for the reasons explained therein.

The data in the corpora were classified according to the different variables studied and analysed in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this thesis, and, for that reason, three different data bases were created (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3) so as to facilitate the quantitative analysis.

1.4.2 Analysis and interpretation of the data

Grotjalm (1987) writes about two "pure" research paradigms: 1) the exploratory-interpretive, which "utilises a non-experimental method, yields qualitative data and provides an interpretive analysis of those data" and 2) the analytical-nomological, in which the data are collected through an experiment, and yields quantitative data which are subjected to statistical analysis. In addition to these "pure" paradigms, there are other "mixed" paradigms which mix and match the two pure paradigms in different ways (1987: 59-60). The paradigm of research used in this work is of the mixed type, for I shall work with both qualitative and quantitative data, which will be analysed both in an interpretive and a statistical manner. As was noted above, all the hypotheses (except for Hypothesis n° 10) are tested through a study of the frequencies of occurrence of the variables in question, and the statistical tests of the Median, Kruskal Wallis or Chi square are applied when considered

necessary.

In J.D. Brown's terms (1988), both primary and secondary research are carried out herein. Within the primary research part, the statistical study being made is of the survey type.

The linguistic analysis carried out all throughout this study is of a discourse-pragmatic nature, and, consequently, the variables studied will be interpreted from this perspective. This point is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

I shall now describe the general scheme of this thesis by referring to the contents of each of the chapters.

1.5 Chapter outline

Chapter 2 outlines the classical/traditional perspectives on irony and discusses the extent to which these theories should be accepted. Qualitative data from the corpora are presented, as well as a qualitative analysis of examples showing both examples of verbal irony that fit the traditional definitions and examples that do not. The latter are used as qualitative evidence in favour of Hypothesis n° 1. In addition, different typologies of irony are analysed in order to distinguish the type of irony that will be studied all throughout this work, namely, VERBAL IRONY, from other types.

Chapter 3 places verbal irony as a topic to be studied within the framework of pragmatic phenomena. The relationship of verbal irony with Grice's Cooperative Principle, as well as

its relation to conversational and conventional implicatures is discussed. Evidence is presented of instances of verbal irony whose implicatures have been "conventionalised", and, therefore, hypothesis n° 2 is tested. Also, verbal irony is presented in the scope of Speech-act Theory in order to test hypothesis n° 3. Corpus examples of speech act-oriented irony (in opposition to proposition-oriented irony) are analysed.

Chapter 4 presents the most prominent psycholinguistic theories of verbal irony. Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Mention Theory (1981, 1984), Kreuz & Glucksberg's Echoic Reminder Theory (1989), Clark & Gerrig's Pretence Theory (1984), Sigmund Freud's interpretation of jokes and irony, as well as some theories of laughter are discussed. This discussion, together with the analysis of several corpus examples related to it, intends to provide evidence for the acceptance of hypotheses n° 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter 5 studies verbal irony with respect to Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory (1978, 1987). As with the other theories presented in previous chapters, some of the issues put forward by Brown & Levinson are argued, and evidence from the different corpora analysed is presented to test (in a qualitative manner) hypotheses n° 7, 8, 9 and 10. It will appear that 1) verbal irony cannot always be considered as an off record strategy, 2) the three types of irony found in this study have to do with the positive and/or negative face of the addressee or third person in question, 3) verbal irony can violate not only Grice's Quality Maxim but also the Manner, Quantity and Relevance maxims, 4) an ironic speaker may convey his/her meaning through

different off record strategies, and 5) the sociological variables P, D and R influence the use or non-use of verbal irony in different ways.

In chapter 6, I present a study of intonation and other prosodic features as they occur in ironic discourse. Treatments of irony in the area of intonation and prosody are discussed and evaluated by means of examples from the corpora. A survey is made of the frequencies of occurrence of the different tones (Rise, Fall, Rise-fall, Fall-rise and Level) and other prosodic features in the LLC. The other corpora are not used in this quantitative analysis because prosodic features are not marked in them. The statistical test of the Chi-Square (χ^2) is applied to test hypothesis n° 11 and show whether there is a significant difference between the tones used in non-ironic discourse and those used in ironic discourse. A study of the probabilities of combination of the different prosodic features examined is also made. Finally, I try to discuss in what ways prosodic features may appear in written verbal irony by means of a few corpus examples.

Chapter 7 deals with the types of irony resulting from the discussion of the different approaches studied in previous chapters: 1) From the discussion of traditional approaches, I conclude that there is both a proposition-oriented type of verbal irony and a non-proposition oriented one; 2) from the discussion of Grice's Theory of Implicature, it will appear that there are three main types of irony: a) conversational, b) conventionalised and c) implicature-free; 3) from the discussion of Speech-act

Theory it will be shown that two main types of verbal irony arise: a) speech act-oriented and b) non-speech act-oriented; 4) from the discussion of Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Interpretation Theory, two main types are evident: a) echoic and b) non-echoic; 5) from the discussion of Clark & Gerrig's Pretence Theory, it will appear that there are two main kinds of verbal irony, namely: a) pretence and b) non-pretence; 6) from the discussion of Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory, two main kinds of verbal irony become prominent: a) on record and b) off record. All these types are treated as variables in a quantitative analysis that measures their frequencies of occurrence. This is meant to be the quantitative part of the study intended to test hypotheses n° 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

In chapter 8, I propose a taxonomy of the pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers which is based on the findings of the analysis of the corpus examples. A definition, or, better, a characterisation of the phenomenon of verbal irony is given in terms of the concept of pragmatic strategy. The key concepts in this characterisation are: **strategy**, **semantic oppositions** and **speaker's attitude**. The strategies for the three main kinds of verbal irony are presented and discussed by means of examples from the five different corpora used in this study. Finally, a study of the frequencies of occurrence of all the strategies is made. Hypotheses 5 and 12 are tested here.

In chapter 9, a classification and analysis of the general and specific discourse functions of verbal irony found in the corpora is made. Verbal irony is viewed in the light of

the main approaches to the study of language functions (such as Jakobson's 1960, Halliday (1976, 1978) or Brown and Yule (1983), but since these approaches prove to be too abstract and general, a more specific and detailed repertoire of functions is described and developed for verbal irony on the basis of the evidence of the samples of ironic discourse in the corpora. A quantitative analysis of the frequencies of occurrence of the different functions identified is made in order to test the final hypothesis of this work, namely, hypothesis n° 13.

Chapter 10 is the concluding chapter, which summarizes the most important findings of the research done in this dissertation and also discusses some of the possibilities for further research on the topic in question.

1.6 Contributions intended by this study

In general terms, this study intends to contribute to a better comprehension of verbal irony as a linguistic/pragmatic phenomenon. This entails the comprehension of its causes, its purposes, the relationship of the interlocutors when engaged in ironic discourse, the types of verbal irony that can be chosen as a strategy, and the functions used by speakers involved in ironic communication.

In particular, I consider the following contributions to be original and not found in the existing literature to date:

- A taxonomy of types of verbal irony (chapter 7);
- An inventory of the pragmatic strategies used by ironic

- speakers (chapter 8);
- An inventory of the discourse functions intended by users of verbal irony (chapter 9); and
 - Both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of frequencies related to: a) the taxonomies proposed (chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9), and b) the prosodic features that accompany verbal irony (chapter 6).

It is my hope, thus, that these contributions help to unravel (at least a bit more than could be done before) the intricate network of psychological, sociological and linguistic mechanisms that a speaker/writer puts into motion when s/he chooses the strategy of verbal irony.

Chapter 2: CLASSICAL FORMULATIONS

OF THE CONCEPT OF IRONY

<<There's true passion only in
the ambiguous and ironic>>

Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor
Faustus*

2.1 Aims of the chapter

One of the aims of this chapter is to survey some definitions of irony and to make a historical account of the evolution of the concept in a general manner. More detailed examination of certain prominent and insightful theories of irony will be made in later chapters.

The main objective within the chapter will be to try to find evidence that shows that many ironic utterances do not simply mean "the opposite of what is said literally" (as classical approaches claim), which will consequently be considered as evidence for the first Research Hypothesis of this study. This does not mean that examples supporting the classical claim were not found. In fact, as had been expected, a great number of examples illustrating the classical-traditional thesis were found in the corpus, in which it can be said that the ironic effect is mainly conveyed by means of the use of "the words which are contrary to the intended meaning". I shall present and analyse these examples, which seem to be simpler and less problematic for interpretation, as well as less "intricate" if we look at them from the standpoint of the speaker producing them. But I shall also show, discuss and analyse the examples that led me to the

them. But I shall also show, discuss and analyse the examples that led me to the conviction that in many cases, when being ironic, a speaker means the opposite and something else, or that s/he may mean something different from the literal words, which has nothing to do with the "opposite"; even more, s/he may, in fact, mean her/his literal words plus something else without diminishing the ironic effect in the least. Furthermore, I will try to answer the question: "what do we mean by 'the opposite'?"; the opposite of the proposition?, of the speech act?, of the presupposition?. Classical-traditional approaches have always been proposition-oriented. Thus, I shall try to show that "meaning the opposite proposition" is not the only possibility for verbal irony and, what seems to be more interesting, that "saying the opposite" is just one more of the possible strategies used to convey ironic meanings.

2.2 Some definitions

Irony has been thought of by many authors as a subject that quickly arouses passions. It is both liberating and destroying, clear and obscure, positive and negative. Irony may mean many different things in many different situations and contexts. Hence, it is very difficult to define, perhaps because of its very essence: "its very spirit and value are violated by the effort to be clear about it" (Booth, 1974: ix). The elusiveness of the concept is ironical in itself, as D.C. Enright observes in the introduction to his *Essay on Irony*:

<<Irony... irony... irony. And we haven't yet started. It is unfortunate, it is even ironical, that for so ubiquitous and multifarious and, some say, alluring a phenomenon there should be but one word>> (1988: 7).

Irony has always struck me as one of the cleverest and richest devices of language. Even as a child, I wondered what the strategies or mental connections were that the ironic speaker or writer had to set into motion to get his/her meaning across and how it was that the listener or audience interpreted such a phenomenon. Indeed, on many occasions irony has been referred to as a mode of expression that appeals to the wit and intelligence of the person who uses it and to the listener or reader who recognizes it. For irony is not a privilege of literature or literary language; it is part of everyday interaction and seems to occur very frequently in family talk or everyday language as well as in many other types of discourse.

The meaning of irony can be traced back to Socrates' time (circa 470-399 B.C.). Socrates introduced irony into the world by pretending to be ignorant: By asserting that he was never anyone's teacher, he taught others. This was Socrates' "eironeia": feigned ignorance in order to instruct. In the political sphere, the Athenian statesman and orator Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.) perceived the *eiron* as a civic evader of responsibility through feigned unfitness.

The Roman orator Cicero (106-43 B.C.) marked the movement from a behavioural characteristic to a rhetorical figure that blames by praise or praises by blame. It is important to

remember Cicero's view of the phenomenon, since it will serve us in the later development and classification of the concept. I shall follow his approach in considering that irony can also be used as a praising device, an approach that is not shared by some modern researchers on the subject.

The Roman rhetorician Quintilian (circa 35-100 A.D.) appears to have expanded the circumscribed figure to the manner of whole arguments. He writes of irony as an "ornament" of sentences. He considers it a "trope" as well as a "figure" of speech. As a trope, he defines irony as "the trope in which contrary things are shown" [my translation] (*Instituciones Oratorias*, 1942: 84). As a figure, he indicates that some people give irony the name of "pretence", though he later states that both kinds of irony do not differ very much from each other since both should be understood as "the contrary of what the words sound" [my translation] (1942: 99-100).

These classical definitions were to be the basis of later definitions such as the one given by Samuel Johnson in his *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755): "A mode of speech of which the meaning is contrary to the words".

A wider and more modern formulation is the following, in which the word "different" is added, leaving the door open to other interpretations of irony:

<<Expression of one's meaning by language of opposite or different tendency, especially simulated adoption of another's point of view or laudatory tone for purpose of ridicule; ill-timed or perverse arrival of

event or circumstance in itself desirable, as if mockery of the fitness of things; use of language that has an inner meaning for a privileged audience and an outer meaning for the persons addressed or concerned. /f.L.f. Gk eironeia, simulated ignorance. eiron dissembler/>>. (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, quoted by Enright, 1988:5)

The traditional and classical concept of irony has remained valid in this century for some scholars. The 1994 edition of *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines irony as:

<<The humorous and sardonic use of words to express the opposite of what one really means (as when words of praise are given but blame is intended)>>.

When saying "the opposite of what the words mean" I understand that the classical approaches refer to the opposite meaning of the proposition of the utterance; then, within this framework, an utterance would only be ironic when its proposition is false or insincere. To put it in other words, and using Bruce Fraser's (1994) terminology, an ironic utterance would always express an act of *misrepresentation*. The essence of misrepresentation lies in conveying false information. There are many kinds of misrepresentation: lying, for example, is an act of misrepresentation. But, what is the difference between lying and being ironic? Are we lying when we are ironic and say something different from the truth? Fraser distinguishes between two main types of misrepresentation: intentional and unintentional. Both lying and being ironic are intentional acts of misrepresentation, but intentional acts of misrepresentation may have the intent to mislead or not to mislead the hearer, and

here is where the difference between lying and being ironic is found. Fraser himself writes about "speaking sarcastically" as an intentional act of misrepresentation with the intent not to mislead, that is, the ironic or sarcastic speaker wants the hearer to understand and know his (the speaker's) hidden meaning, whereas the liar's intention is to mislead the hearer and deceive him. As can be observed, Fraser is also working here with conditions of truth or falsehood, though his interpretation of them is a more flexible one than the logical interpretation, for he states that "the notion of false information is a matter of individual speaker/hearer belief at any given time" (1994: 144).

Fraser's classification of acts of misrepresentation is useful and clarifying in many respects, and the location of irony within this framework that I have just made is - I believe - only appropriate for the majority of irony cases, but not for all of them, for, as I shall try to show in the development of this chapter, there are instances of irony in which the speaker cannot be accused of misrepresenting the truth, not even the truthfulness of his belief at the particular time of his utterance. David Holdcroft (1983) gives proof of this when reflecting on Socrates' irony. Holdcroft states that in saying that his wisdom consisted in the recognition that he knew nothing, Socrates was not being ironical in the sense of "saying the opposite of what he meant"; on the contrary, he meant what he said (1983: 509).

In her paper "On saying what you mean without meaning

what you say", Ann Cuttler also holds the thesis that when a speaker is ironic he is being false or insincere. She adds that "there are certain types of statement which cannot turn out to be false" and that "it is not surprising, therefore, that they also cannot accept irony" (1974:120). This is clearly a formulation looked at through the prism of truth-conditional semantics, but we now know that semantics is something more than conditions of truth or falsehood and that language is not reduced to a set of true and false propositions. It has been observed in the research that, in many cases, ironic meaning is conveyed through a contradiction of speech acts (as we shall see in chapter 3) or through several other strategies. Anne Cuttler also states that a simple question "cannot accept an ironic reading" (1974: 121), a statement that, as we shall see in example 4 of section 2.4 in this chapter (and later on in many other examples in the corpora analysed), can not be supported by my and other authors' -like Haverkate (1988) for instance- approaches to irony.

The classical idea of irony can also be inferred in Brown and Levinson's treatment of the subject in their *Theory of Politeness* (1978). This theory will be analysed in detail in chapter 5, since it has thrown great light on pragmatic issues, and I consider it very fertile soil for the exposition and clarification of ironic phenomena, in spite of the fact that in the approach taken in this work some of its proposals can and will be argued.

Even though -as has been shown- there have been and there still are many authors who look at irony exclusively from the "opposite-proposition", traditional point of view, it is now becoming obvious for many researchers that the phenomenon is not that simple. Even in the cases in which the speaker or writer means "the opposite" there are further pragmatic shades of meaning that can be analysed. Irony expresses elusive thoughts and fine shades of feeling with particular effectiveness. In many cases we can only speak of "mild irony" or different degrees of irony, as will be shown all through the development of this study, which will help us look at irony from a less strict and less rigid point of view, showing us that it is very difficult to define a concept in terms of absolute categories like truth or falsehood. Roy (1978) notes in a study of irony in conversation that irony versus non-irony is not a binary distinction but rather a continuum. Deborah Tannen (1984) makes a thorough analysis of the irony used by herself and some friends in a conversation on the occasion of a Thanksgiving dinner, and she notes that even when she knows that arriving at a satisfying definition of irony is a difficult task, she regarded statements as humorous or ironic *"if they seemed not to be meant literally and seemed to be intended to amuse"* (1984:130). This criterion to classify utterances as ironic perhaps reflects the modern conception of irony supported by a considerable number of speakers of English. It shows a wider and more open standpoint for the consideration of the phenomenon. Tannen also remarks

that there is always some subjectivity involved in classifying utterances as ironic or not ironic, a subjectivity that I myself have also found difficult to avoid all throughout the development of this study. In any case, complete objectivity seems to be a chimera in any piece of research if we consider that everything that we study is seen through our limited human eyes and minds. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) show how both objectivism and subjectivism become myths if taken to an extremist position.

Another author reflecting this wider viewpoint of the concept of irony is Walter Nash (1985), who views irony as an indisputably major stylistic resort within humour, and remarks that literary critics are, nowadays, in the habit of using the word to denote "any oblique reflection, any inconsistency of character, any unforeseen turn in the fable, any sign of a perverse current of meaning not directed by the author". This is a real and valid view of irony, though Nash states that he considers it a rather loose one. For that reason, he later tries to delimit the concept a bit more and adds that the consensus appears to be (among different authors and dictionaries) that:

<<The ironist insincerely states something he does not mean, but through the manner of his statement -whether through its formulation, or its delivery, or both- is able to encode a counter-proposition, his "real meaning", which may be interpreted by the attentive listener or reader>> (1985: 152)

It can be observed here that, on the one hand, Nash is conscious

of the existence of a line of thought that studies irony from a wider perspective, but, on the other hand, he restricts the meaning of irony for fear it may become a loose or unmanageable concept, and so he falls into the old conception of the "counter-proposition", which, as I have noted and shall try to show hereinafter, is valid only for some cases of irony.

As can be seen, no author is completely clear about the definition of irony and no one has been able to provide the researchers of the phenomenon with concise accounts of its workings. The intention of this study is, thus, to clarify the concept in the light of linguistic-pragmatics, with the belief that this approach is more comprehensive than the classical one.

It would perhaps be desirable to arrive at a more complete and all-embracing definition of irony than the ones we have been analysing, although the more I study the phenomenon, the more I believe that this is a very difficult, if not impossible task, at least with respect to the "all-embracing" part of my statement. In a way, Marino is right when he says (about irony) in the *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*:

<<It does little good to make a neat formal definition that neither the language nor even individual scholars can observe. The chimera can be neither slain nor tamed>> (1994: 1776).

Before presenting the examples taken from the corpus which illustrate classical theories and the ones that are intended to give evidence for my first hypothesis, it will be necessary to

present the different types of irony that have been considered and generated by different authors, so that I am able to state which of the categories will be the object of this study.

2.3 Typologies of irony

Different authors have classified irony in different ways. Not all classifications will be considered, since the ones presented here appear to be sufficient for the purposes of this investigation. I shall proceed to explain, then, what the authors mean by "irony of fate", "dramatic irony", "extant irony", "artefacted irony", "verbal irony" and "situational irony".

2.3.1 Irony of fate, dramatic irony and verbal irony

David King and Thomas Crerar (1969) write about three different kinds of irony: a) irony of circumstance or fate, b) dramatic irony, and c) verbal irony. I shall try to explain what each one is supposed to be:

a) the irony of fate is the irony which lies in the predicament that the pattern of the narrative creates. Many authors have made use of this kind of irony, e.g.: Conrad in *Youth*, Steinbeck in *The Pearl*, Tolstoy in *How much Land does a Man Need?*, etc. King & Crerar illustrate this type of irony with the old story of the servant who, "one morning, went down into the market place

of his town and there encountered the figure of Death. Death stared at him with a strange expression. Terrified, the servant ran to his master to beg permission to flee that afternoon to Samarra. The master consented. Later, he descended himself into the market place, saw the figure of Death, and accosted him. "Why did you look so fiercely at my servant?", he demanded. "Not fiercely", replied Death. "I was startled to see him in his place. I have an appointment with him this afternoon in Samarra." (1969: 124).

This story is ironic in that the very thing the servant did to save his life was what led him to his death. The audience first hears with relief that the servant will flee to Samarra but then learns what his real fate will be.

b) Dramatic irony is the kind of irony created in a work of fiction -especially in a drama. There is here an action of speech whose significance is missed by one or more of the characters presented. King & Crerar give the example of Oedipus, who curses the man who has polluted Thebes, the city state he governs as a king; it is he who has polluted the city -then he brings down the curse upon his own head.

In my opinion, the difference between irony of fate and dramatic irony is very subtle, and many times they can be the same or co-occur. In fact, there are authors who do not make such a distinction. Now, there is, indeed, considerable difference between these two kinds and the third category, i.e., verbal irony, which I shall now treat.

c) Verbal irony is the type of irony I am concerned with in this study. Verbal irony does not depend upon a special pattern in events, upon coincidence or upon circumstances in the same way as the other two types. Naturally, its interpretation is related to a certain context and circumstances, but the irony here is generated by utterances and by the varying degrees of understatement with which the words are used. The following definition of verbal irony is King & Crerar's, and adds to our consideration of different approaches to the concept:

<<It is the irony created by words used in such a way that their surface meaning is different from the underlying, intended meaning. It will be generated most often either by exaggeration or by understatement, both of which in their own way draw the reader's attention to the author's real purpose. Since verbal irony tends to ridicule rather than praise, it is a useful device in the hands of a satirist, whose function is to display abuses, mock them, and, ideally, inspire us to correct them. It will permit a writer to express himself with subtlety, wit, intelligence, and restraint and thus challenge the able and perceptive reader>> (1969: 125).

Some observations should be made about the previous definition:

- King and Crerar speak of writer and reader only; thus, it is necessary that speaker and listener be added. In this study both spoken and written language will be considered. The corpus I am using for this piece of research consists of television programmes, a corpus of English conversation, some newspaper articles and a book containing a collection of excerpts from Bertrand Russell's works (as specified in 1.4).

- Nothing is said about the Cooperative Principle, implicatures speech acts, pragmatic strategies or discourse functions, because it is a rather old definition (albeit far more embracing than the traditional ones). These aspects will be dealt with in due course in this study.
- The authors say that irony tends to ridicule rather than praise, which does not mean that it can never be used to praise. Indeed, they themselves present perfect examples of irony conveying praise. This point will be treated in special detail in chapters 4 and 5.

Prototypical examples of verbal irony would be:

1. You're a fine friend.
2. How clever of you!

when, in 1, the addressee has done something that does not precisely make him a good friend, and when, in 2, the addressee has done or said something that was not considered clever or appropriate by the speaker. But verbal irony can go much further than this, as will be shown throughout the chapters of this thesis.

2.3.2 Extant and Artefacted irony

M. Marino, in the aforementioned *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*, presents four categories of irony which have been pragmatically generated -verbal, dramatic, extant and artefacted irony- and adds the following interesting comment:

"Any claim to mutual exclusivity or comprehensiveness for these categories would be ironically naive" (1994: 1776).

As regards verbal irony, Marino names and analyses the classical definitions, arriving at the conclusion that "the usual invocation of an opposite meaning seems far too strong since so many verbal ironies are only subtly different from their literal messages" (1994: 1777).

As can be observed, this classification coincides with the previous one in verbal and dramatic irony, but there are two other types that are not named by King and Cramer or at least are not called by such names, i.e., extant and artefacted irony. From the explanations given, it can be inferred that extant irony is approximately the same as irony of fate, only with a more "philosophical touch". It is a kind of cosmic irony that suggests the indifference of the universe to the efforts of man and can be expressed in a view that God, a god, or the universe manipulates outcomes in some way not known to human beings, which is not considerate of their aspirations (1994: 1777). Artefacted irony is the kind of irony that is particularly artefacted for effects beyond its irony. Marino states that Socratic irony falls into this category, since Socrates clearly artefacted special circumstances in such a way that "the naivete of the pose created allowed him subtly to expose the error of his victim and effectively to understate his own view of truth" (1994: 1777).

Again, it is very difficult to see in what way this last type of irony is distinct from at least two of the other types,

since, if I am not mistaken, both verbal and dramatic irony can be said to be artefacted to obtain effects beyond their irony: the former by the speaker/writer, and the latter by the creator or writer of the play or work.

2.3.3 Verbal versus situational irony

Finally, I shall turn my attention to a more general and simple typology: the one offered by D.C. Muecke (1969). Muecke draws a distinction between two basic kinds of irony: verbal and situational. The difference between them is mainly a matter of intention, i.e., in verbal irony the ironist's intention to be ironical is a necessary -albeit not sufficient- condition, whereas the irony of an ironical situation or event is unintentional: "the confident unawareness of the victim of the irony is a necessary but again not sufficient condition for the existence of irony in that situation or event" (Muecke, 1973:35). Muecke explains that situational irony includes dramatic irony, cosmic irony and irony of fate, and that this is basically an irony to be observed (and not to be uttered).

Katharina Barbe (1993) and other authors (Tanaka 1973, Litman and May 1991, etc.) follow Muecke in his approach. Barbe, from a more modern and colloquial perspective, states that verbal irony is implicit in that we never specify: "I am ironic in saying this..." or "I am now going to make an ironic utterance". Situational irony is, on the contrary, explicit, because when we

speak of any ironic situation, we generally say (or write) things like: "It is ironic to me that...", "Isn't it ironic that...?". Thus Barbe acknowledges the presence of explicit irony markers in the case of situational irony.

It is one of the objectives of this investigation to find out whether we can also speak of irony markers for verbal irony. This seems to be a difficult task, considering its implicit nature, but all hope is not lost, since it has been noticed that there might exist a certain degree of conventionalisation in certain ironic expressions, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

Muecke's categorisation is considered good enough for the purposes of this research and, consequently, I shall hereinafter refer either to verbal or situational irony, disregarding other typologies. As has already been stated, verbal irony is the object of this study, though situational irony will be useful in cases in which the need to contrast one type with the other might turn up.

2.4 Analysis of various examples from the corpus in relation to traditional approaches

2.4.1. Prototypical examples

Despite the fact that examples such as those presented in 2.3.1 ("You're a fine friend" or "What a clever idea") are considered to be the prototypical ones for verbal irony, it has not been easy to find such examples in the corpus. As has already been explained, there always seem to appear other shades

of pragmatistical meaning that go beyond "the opposite of the literal meaning or proposition". In any case, the following instances of verbal irony are the closest I have found to the classical idea of irony, i.e., they are instances in which it can be said that the speaker means "the opposite". The test I will use in order to check whether or not they fit into the traditional definitions of irony will be precisely to express the proposition contrary to what the literal proposition expresses and see if that is the meaning the speaker wanted to convey.

[1] The following conversational exchange has been taken from the GG corpus. As was explained in Chapter 1, the golden "girls" are four mature women who live together in Florida. Dorothy and Sophia are always very sarcastic, and Rose is considered to be rather naive and not very intelligent. In this episode Rose is worried about Blanche's having gone to the hospital to donate one of her kidneys to her sister:

Rose: I'm worried about Blanche. I wish she'd let one of us go with her.

Sophia: Not me. I hate hospitals. My friend Manny Fishbein went into the hospital a healthy guy. Then, boom-boom, dead. Just like that. In his sleep. Ninety-eight years old. No apparent cause.

Rose: I don't like hospitals either. They're full of germs. I always hold my breath in the elevators because there are sick people in the elevators and it's such a small space and once I had to go to the eighth floor of a hospital and the elevator stopped on every floor and I had to hold my breath all that time and I finally fainted and I hit my head and then I had to stay there because I had a concussion and I had to hold my breath all the way down

in the elevator to the emergency room then I had to hold my breath in X-ray where they ask you to hold your breath anyway and...
(Dorothy enters)

Dorothy: I have great news.

Sophia: Rose, you'll excuse me. We'll get back to your fascinating hospital story later.
(GG, 1991: 54-5)

Sophia's last statement is clearly ironic after Rose's boring story explaining why she does not like hospitals. I believe it can be said here that Sophia means the opposite of the literal meaning of her utterance, i.e., Rose's hospital story is not fascinating, and it does not seem possible that they will get back to the story later (as opposed to the literal meaning of the proposition). The test for proving whether Sophia's utterance is ironical in the traditional sense or not has been passed: Sophia means that she does not want to get back to the story and that the story is not fascinating. But more pragmatic meaning can be understood between the lines. It could also be added that Sophia thinks that Rose's story is boring and even stupid, and that she prefers to listen to Dorothy's news. Sophia's last utterance can also be taken as an indirect speech act meaning something like: "stop telling your silly story; I'm fed up with it, and I would like to change the topic of conversation". This would be a command having the form of an assertion (this aspect will be analysed in detail in 3.4).

The reader might have noticed another instance of irony in the conversation reproduced for this example, namely, Sophia's

first comment about her friend Manny Fishbein, who "died in hospital when he was ninety-eight years old of *no apparent cause*". But the irony in this case cannot be considered as an example of verbal irony, for Sophia is saying it convincingly, being apparently innocent of the irony present in stating that a ninety-eight year-old person has died of no apparent cause (considering that she herself is quite old too), thus I think this is a clear case of "situational irony" and not of verbal irony.

[2] In the following chunk of dialogue taken from the LLC, more than one instance of verbal irony can be found. In fact, the whole chunk has an ironic tone, but it is only in one of A's utterances where it can be said that the speaker means "the opposite":

A	11	^have you ever 'heard Pro'fessor Mc"C\all	/
A	11	l/ecture# -	/
A	11	^he's ((round)) at "T\OPAS I th/ink#	/
B	11	*((^n/o#))*	/
A	11	*I* ^only 'ever :went :/\once# .	/
A	11	it was e^n/ough# -	/
B	11	^[\m]# - -	/
A	11	^oh d/\ear#	/
A	11	^Br\idget will 'tell you th/at#	/
A	11	^she was at the :same !l\ecture#	/
B	11	^[\m]# - -	/
B	11	^what's _he !l\ike#	/
A	11	^oh he was t/\errible#	/
B	20	(- giggles)	/
A	11	^t\errible# -	/
A	11	^so abstr/use# -	/
A	11	he ^does !s\ound 'changes#	/
A	11	and ^all th\at sort of 'thing#	/
A	11	^you !kn/ow#	/
B	20	(- - - laughs)	/
A	11	^so abstr/use#	/
A	13	^he ^[?]he you ^can't 'read his 'writing on the	/

A 13 bl/ackboard# /
 A 11 he ^uses a bl\ack'board# . //
 A 11 ((and)) ^writes il'legible th/ings on it# //
 A 11 *^you* kn/ow# - //
 B 11 *^[\m]#* //
 A 11 ^which is ((a)) gr\eat help# - //
 A 11 and ^then he says !course ((if)) you !don't //
 A 11 underst\and this# - //
 A 11 this ^subject's !not for y/ou# . //
 A 11 (. laughs) /

(LLC, 1980: S.1.6)

When A says that Professor McCall's writing on the blackboard was "a great help", it is evident that she means that it was not a help at all, considering all that was previously said about the professor. If the professor wrote "illegible things" on the blackboard, these things could not have been a great help. Then the test for traditional irony is passed: the speaker means the opposite proposition, i.e., "the writing on the blackboard was not a help". But, at the same time, there are other comments such as "I only went once. It was enough", which show ironic criticism on the part of the speaker, though not by meaning the opposite. The whole dialogue leaves the hearer or reader with the impression that Professor McCall's lectures are very boring and do not teach the audience much. At the same time, a derogatory attitude can be deduced on the part of the speakers towards the subject taught by the professor, which seems to be of no interest to them. Again, the meaning of ironic utterances proves to follow the classical guidelines to a certain point, but it also proves to go further than that. Examples of this sort (going further than meaning "the opposite proposition")

will be analysed and tested in the following section (2.4.2).

[3] I shall now turn to the British television series "Yes, Minister". In the first episode (called "Open Government") James Hacker, fresh from his triumph at the general election, is very nervous because he is expecting a telephone call from the Prime Minister, who should confirm his status as a Cabinet Minister. His wife is very nervous too, and does not seem to feel very happy about being a politician's wife:

Hacker's wife: It sounds as if you're about to enter the
Ministry

Hacker: Yes, but which Ministry. That's the whole point.

Hacker's wife: It was a joke!

Hacker: You're very tense

Hacker's wife: Oh, no! I'm not tense. I'm just a politician's
wife. A happy, carefree politician's wife.

(YM, 1994 video episode)

Hacker's wife is one of the characters in the series that uses verbal irony most. She shows great scepticism about her husband's new functions as a Cabinet Minister and does not like the consequences this new situation brings to their family life (they have no free time, her husband works long hours, etc.). In her last utterance in the dialogue, it can be appreciated that she is being ironic in the traditional way, since what she precisely means is that she is neither happy nor carefree. She

also implies that being a politician's wife is not an easy or simple thing ("I'm just a politician's wife"). The use of the word "just" here is very revealing. Again, and after finding an example in which the test for prototypical irony is passed, we find other elements in the linguistic context of that example that help the ironic meaning, but that do not mean the opposite of the proposition expressed. Hacker's wife cannot mean "I'm not just a politician wife", for she is, in fact, the wife of a Minister. The ironic meaning here is better interpreted here through the contrast found between the word "just", which literally means "simply", and the difficult role of a politician's wife. She ultimately means, then, that she is finding it very difficult to play such a role.

[4] It has been very difficult to find a prototypical example of irony within Bertrand Russell's heavily ironic argumentative prose. The irony is always present in his writings, but in a more refined, intricate and complex way. One instance which could be considered to be one of his nearest approaches to traditional irony can be found in the following passage:

<<When Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning-rod, the clergy, both in England and America, with enthusiastic support of George III, condemned it as an impious attempt to defeat the will of God. For, as all right-thinking people were aware, lightning is sent by God to punish impiety or some other grave sin - the virtuous are never struck by lightning. Therefore if God wants to strike anyone, Benjamin Franklin ought not to defeat His design; indeed, to do so is helping criminals to escape.>>

(BR, 1958: 135)

When Russell writes "right-thinking people" he, in fact, obviously means that these people were not right-thinking at all; thus it can be said that, in this case, he is following the traditional rules to express verbal irony: he means the opposite. Likewise, when he writes "to do so is helping criminals to escape" , he really wants to show his readers that he is ridiculing the people (the clergy) who held this belief, and that what he thinks is precisely the opposite: "to do so has nothing to do with helping criminals to escape". But if I am to be rigorous in the analysis, the meaning conveyed here is not exactly the opposite of the proposition; the exact opposite would be "To do so is not to help criminals to escape", which is not the intended meaning. The intended meaning has to do with a serious criticism of the clergy, in which Russell attacks what he believes to be their prejudices and ignorance, and so he adopts this scornful, mock-ironic tone. Likewise, when he ironically writes "the virtuous are never struck by lightning", he does not mean the opposite of the proposition, i.e. "The virtuous are always struck by lightning" as can clearly be appreciated. What he really means is that the people who hold this belief are foolish or ignorant. Here we are facing an instance of "echoic verbal irony", by means of which the writer echoes other people's ideas and laughs at them or criticises them in some way. Echoic verbal irony is discussed in 4.2, 4.3 and 4.6. (see also chapters 7 and 8).

Once more, we have been able to observe the ironic

speaker/writer making use of his weapon according to traditional norms in some way, but escaping its boundaries in search of a better and richer way of expressing his thoughts.

2.4.2. Counterexamples: Testing Research Hypothesis n° 1

Although the classical definitions capture some aspects of the phenomenon of irony, they only describe it in a partial way, as I believe can be deduced from all that has been said hitherto. It is a leap from this conventional idea of irony to the richness that can be found in it. Some authors now support this view; one of these is Diane Blakemore (1992), who presents many ironic utterances which simply cannot be analysed in terms of "meaning the opposite; e.g.: the quotation "Oh, to be in England, now that April's there", produced on a cold, wet day during an English spring; shows that the speaker is making fun of romantic ideas about spring. Blakemore follows Sperber & Wilson in her approach (Sperber & Wilson's view of irony will be discussed and analysed in detail in chapter 4). Other authors, Booth (1974) and Harvey (1983) among them, have also presented insightful illustrations of the fact that irony -albeit not a very complicated concept to be apprehended- has at least a problematical nature which sets it apart from the clear and simple classical definitions. This is the basic idea of the first Research Hypothesis of this study. In chapter 3 we shall see how the contradiction implied in all cases of verbal irony may be present at the illocutionary level

of the speech act and not at that of the proposition. There are also other levels at which verbal irony can be manifested, for instance, the level of presupposition, as has been shown by Bollobás (1981).

I shall now proceed to analyse some ironic examples from the corpus in which it can not be said by any means that the speaker/writer is conveying the opposite meaning of the proposition. I believe that these examples display great evidence in favour of Research Hypothesis n° 1.

[1]

<<A large proportion of the human race, it is true, is obliged to work so hard in obtaining necessities that little energy is left over for other purposes; but those whose livelihood is assured do not on that account, cease to be active.... Mrs A, who is quite sure of her husband's success in business, and has no fear of the workhouse, likes to be better dressed than Mrs B, although she could escape the danger of pneumonia at much less expense>>

(BR, 1958: 31)

This passage is a part of one of Russell's social analyses, in which he criticises one sector of this society (the rich: "those whose livelihood is assured"), and, to that purpose, he depicts the ambitions of the rich in an ironical way, which, I believe, would be very difficult to catalogue as "meaning the opposite". When he ironically writes "Mrs A likes to be better dressed than Mrs B, although she could escape the danger of pneumonia at much less expense", he does not mean that Mrs A does not like to be better dressed than Mrs B or that she could not escape the danger of pneumonia at much less expense; in fact, he

means every word he says, since it is true that "Mrs A" could be well dressed and not catch a cold wearing cheaper clothes. But we infer there is a further meaning because of his choice of words and way of expressing himself: it is, for example, the formal language used in "she could escape the danger of pneumonia at much less expense" that makes us think there is a mocking and pungently criticising intention. The test for traditionally conveyed irony has not been passed by this piece of ironic discourse.

[2] In the following dialogue, taken from GG, we will be able to appreciate, once more, the bitterness and sarcastic irony which is very frequently present in Sophia's words. In this episode the girls are taking care of some neighbours' baby:

Blanche: What's the baby doing here?

Dorothy: It's Lucy and Ted's baby. Ted had a little accident waterskiing, Lucy's taking him to the hospital.

Rose: (to baby) Utchy butchy butchy butchy boo. Utchy butchy butchy boo. Butchy boo. Butchy boo.

Sophia: Finally someone she can talk to.

(GG, 1991: 39)

Sophia's final comment is ironic, though it does not pass the test for traditional irony. It is not the case that Sophia means: "Finally someone she cannot talk to" or "Finally there is not someone she can talk to"; her utterance is an ironical and indirect way of saying that Rose is stupid and can never engage

in clever conversation, but, as has been shown, this meaning seems to be quite distant from what one would consider "the opposite" of the utterance or of the proposition. The irony here lies in the contrast between what would be considered a piece of clever talk or conversation and the "butchy boo" type of conversational exchange between Rose and the baby, which, according to Sophia, is the only or at least the cleverest type of conversation Rose can manage to hold. The use of the adverb *finally* is the clue to an ironic interpretation here, for it implies that she had never before met anyone having an intellectual level low enough to communicate with. This shows, once more, what a powerful weapon irony can be in the hands of a resourceful speaker/writer.

[3] The conversation presented in this example has been taken from the LLC. In it, two academics (a man and a woman) are talking about the Head of the Department. They are obviously criticising him, but, in order not to use a stronger word, A speaks "elegantly" and ironically of him as being "idiosyncratic":

```

A 11 *^{m\y} !g\osh# /
A 11 ^we're a !sm\all de'partment# /
A 11 ^we've !only 'three l\ecturers## . /
A 11 ^w\ell# /
A 11 **^one's** a :pr\incipal l\ecturer# /
A 11 the ^head of dep/artment# /
A 11 and ^then there are ((only)) !tw\o of us /
A 11 l\ecturers# *-* /
A 11 - and we're ^{g\etting} an!\other one# /
A 11 ^\actually# /
A 11 so I ^shan't be the :junior !girl any !l\onger# /
B 11 *^{m}## /

```

```

B 11 ^[\m]# /
A 11 . "^but [?] the !head of de:p\artment# /
A 11 is a ^l\ittle 'bit# /
A 11 ^idio'syn!cr\atic# . /
A 11 an "^(\\awfully) :n\ice 'chap# /
A 11 I ^get on 'very :w\ell with him# /
A 11 I'm ^not . !m\eaning that# /
A 11 ^there's !\any [@m]# - /
A 11 [di] . dis"^h\armony# . /
A 11 we ^get on !f\ine# /
A 11 ^b\ut# . /
A 11 in ^his i!deas of :teaching :\English# /
A 11 [[:] - a ^little 'idiosyn:cr\atic# - /

```

(LLC, 1980: S.1.6)

This is followed by a criticism of some comment about Literature made by the Head of the Department. When ironically qualifying him as idiosyncratic, A does not mean that "he is not idiosyncratic"; once more the test for traditional or prototypical irony is not passed: The hearer should better infer that A does not agree at all with the Head of Department's ideas about teaching English or perhaps something stronger: that the Head of Department has crazy ideas about teaching English. The hedges "a little bit" and "a little" help the ironic interpretation. In fact, it has been observed in all the instances of irony analysed in the corpus that "hedging" is a much more common strategy used by ironists than "using the opposite proposition" (and so it will be shown all throughout this work). This is a clear case of ironic discourse violating the Gricean Maxim of Quantity, and not that of Quality (see 5.2.2).

support research hypothesis n° 1. As was explained in 2.4.1 (example 3), in the first episode, James Hacker is very nervous because he is expecting a telephone call from the Prime Minister, who should confirm his status as a Cabinet Minister. His political adviser, Frank Weisel, calls at his house to tell him the news about the new Cabinet Ministers who have already been appointed:

Weisel: Did you know Martin's got the Foreign Office?
Jack's got Health and Fred's got Energy.

Hacker's wife: Has anyone got brains?

(YM, 1994 video episode: *Open Government*)

The question asked by the wife has a heavily ironic tone; all through the episode, she shows discontent about now being a Minister's wife, and she then tries to mock all the seriousness the situation may have. Again, this question is not contrary to the meaning conveyed by it. Once more, the test is not passed. In fact, here the ironic comment is realised by means of a question, which cannot be said to be true or false. That is why many authors who support the traditional approach to irony, such as Ann Cuttler (1974), assert that simple questions cannot accept an ironic reading. It is clear, however, that Hacker's wife is being sarcastic and ironic when asking scornfully if "anyone has got brains". This is one more of the strategies used to convey irony, namely, the use of rhetorical questions (a strategy that will be illustrated at many points of my discussion, but more specifically in chapters 5 and 8). Obviously, if we stuck to

specifically in chapters 5 and 8). Obviously, if we stuck to strict traditional approaches, we would miss a great deal of the pragmatic meaning conveyed here: Hacker's wife is being bitter again and is trying to say that she doubts any Minister has intelligence.

Many more examples could be presented in favour of research hypothesis n° 1, but I believe the pieces of discourse analysed in this chapter provide enough evidence to make us reflect upon the complex nature of the phenomenon of verbal irony. There is now considerable evidence supporting the first hypothesis of this piece of research. As a final and concluding example I would like to quote Enright (1988) in what he presents as the best known of Pascal's ironies. It comes towards the end of Pascal's Letter XVI, when he explains apologetically that "the letter is longer than usual only because he didn't have the time to make it shorter" (1988: 11). I find it very difficult to express the "opposite" of this proposition, which, in any case, would not express the interesting pragmatic meaning that this utterance seems to carry along with it.

2.5 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter we have been able to look at irony in the light of traditional approaches, which seems to be very useful

for a consideration of how the phenomenon was originally understood by scholars and for later reference when considering the evolution of the concept.

After presenting some of the existing typologies of irony, it has been stated that the object of our study is *verbal irony*, as opposed to *situational irony*.

Examples from the corpus have been presented and analysed, some of which seem to be in agreement with the traditional explanations of irony, although other shades of pragmatic-ironic meaning always seem to be present in them. Some others are clearly counterexamples which show that, in a great number of cases, a speaker or writer can convey irony through strategies other than "stating the opposite". This has provided me with linguistic evidence for the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n° 1, which states that ironical meanings go beyond "the opposite of the literal meaning" of the proposition of the utterance. (A quantitative analysis in relation to this hypothesis is made in chapter 7).

After the analysis of the aforementioned examples, I believe that the most that can be said in favour of "meaning the opposite of the literal words" is that this is only one more of the various strategies that a speaker or writer has at his/her disposal for conveying irony. I shall, therefore, try to broaden the scope, starting, in the following chapter, with the location of irony within the world of pragmatics.

Chapter 3: IRONY AS AN ELEMENT WITHIN
PRAGMATIC PHENOMENA

<<It may be harder to demonstrate objectively that a certain utterance is ironic or flip than, say, that the operation of verb phrase deletion is subject to considerations of syntactic identity. But we are no less certain of the first claim than the second. In the end, there is more than one kind of "knowledge for sure".>>

G. Numberg, *Validating Pragmatic Explanations*

3.1 Irony and Pragmatics

To define Pragmatics and delimit its scope is almost as difficult as to define irony, as Levinson very well shows his readers in the first chapter of *Pragmatics* (1983).

Levinson presents a series of different definitions of Pragmatics and though none of them seem to cover completely the aspects that are part of this discipline, one thing we conclude for sure: irony is an important issue to study within the field of Pragmatics. Elements such as context, meaning beyond literal meaning, speech acts, understatement, implicature, etc., are considered important components of this discipline. If we think of Semantics as the area of study covering the truth-conditional meaning of utterances, then Pragmatics would deal with all other kinds of meaning. In any case, comprehension is demonstrably a mixture of pragmatic and semantic matters, and, as Morgan observes, introspection supplies us with no simple clue to what is semantic and what is pragmatic in a given case (1978: 266).

The reason for this is perhaps that Pragmatics is one more area within the field of Semantics, or, as George Lakoff remarked (in a talk given at the Complutense University in Madrid, 1994):

"Pragmatics is also Semantics".

When dealing with irony, Levinson states that a pragmatic theory must have available "the detailed recipe for usage" which tells us that a given ironic utterance is not the normal usage, and thus not to be taken at face value. He also points to the fact that "pragmatic accounts of language understanding will at least need access to sociolinguistic information" (1983: 28), and I would like to add that they will need access to psycholinguistic and psychologic information as well. Irony is very much connected to psychological mechanisms, as the theories we shall study in chapter 4 emphasize.

Leech's inclusion of "The Irony Principle" as one of his "Principles of Pragmatics" is well-known. Leech notes that both Semantics and Pragmatics are concerned with meaning, but, whereas Semantics traditionally deals with meaning as a dyadic relation, Pragmatics deals with meaning as a triadic relation; thus, "meaning in Pragmatics is defined relative to the speaker or user of the language, whereas meaning in Semantics is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers or hearers" (1983: 6). Therefore, we shall be working within the field of Pragmatics if we make reference to the following aspects of the speech situation: i) addressers or addressees, ii) the context of an utterance, iii) the goals of an utterance, iv) the utterance as

a form of act or activity: a speech act, and v) the utterance as a product of a verbal act (1983: 13-14). These are, according to Leech, the elements of the speech situation that should be taken into account for any serious pragmatic study, but there are other variables that I believe should be included, such as the culture in which the utterance has been produced, its time and place and other sociological variables such as power or distance (as we shall see in chapter 5).

3.1.1 The scope of this study: Discourse analysis and Pragmatics

In this piece of research I am analysing ironic discourse. Therefore, it can also be said that this study is within the scope of Discourse Analysis, as conceived by Brown & Yule (1983), Levinson (1983) or McCarthy and Carter (1994). As Brown & Yule note, "the discourse analyst necessarily takes a pragmatic approach to the study of language in use" (1983:27). The discourse analyst investigates the use of language in context by a speaker or writer. S/he is, thus, interested in what speakers/writers do, and not so much in the formal relationships between sentences or propositions.

Levinson formulates the general properties of the whole class of models to which most Discourse Analysis theorists would subscribe. They are the following:

- (i) There are unit acts -speech acts or moves- that are performed in speaking, which belong to a specifiable, delimited set.
- (ii) Utterances are segmentable into unit parts -utterance units- each of which corresponds to (at least) one unit act.

- (iii) There is a specifiable function, and hopefully a procedure, that will map utterance units into speech acts and vice versa.
- (iv) Conversational sequences are primarily regulated by a set of sequencing rules stated over speech act (or move) types. (1983: 289).

This study takes into account all these aspects for the analysis of ironic communication. Speech acts are analysed in detail, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Primary importance is here given to a) the strategies used by ironic speakers/writers to convey their meaning (an aspect not considered by Brown & Levinson in the above list, but which is nevertheless the topic of study of many pragmaticians and discourse analysts), and b) the functions intended by these speakers/writers for their ironic discourse.

When necessary, I have also resorted to some categories of analysis traditionally used by *conversational analysts*, such as *turn taking structure* or *adjacency pairs* (especially, when trying to explain the strategies employed by English speakers to convey ironic meanings).

The view of language taken in this piece of work is, therefore, a discourse-pragmatic view, which focuses on complete spoken and written texts and on the social and cultural contexts in which such language operates.

No matter how hard it is to delimit a given discipline, we can learn a great deal about its field of concern by observing what practitioners do. This is something Levinson (1983: 32) observes with regard to Pragmatics and which I believe is also valid for the study of irony. We thus now turn to some scholars

who have seriously studied irony within a pragmatic framework, in the hope of clarifying our understanding of the phenomenon by scrutinising what they have done and are doing in their analyses.

3.2 Grice's Cooperative Principle and theory of implicature

Before the year 1960, all semantic theories had one element in common, namely, a great concern with truth conditions (as was shown in the analysis of classical theories of irony, chapter 2). These theories were employed by logicians like Frege or Kripke, who assigned recursively to each sentence the conditions under which the sentence would be true.

The subsequent observations by linguists and philosophers of apparent differences in meaning between certain natural language words and their logical counterparts were the basis for the development of pragmatic reflexion and studies, of which Grice's lectures at Harvard on the topic "Logic and Conversation" (1967) were considered to be crucial.

The important contribution made by Grice's notion of *conversational implicature* -considered to be one of the single most important ideas in Pragmatics- provided linguistic analysts with an explicit account of how it is possible to mean more than what is actually "said". Obviously, this is basic to the study of irony. For as has been shown in the reflexion and analysis of irony made hitherto, in some way or another, when being ironic

a speaker/writer always means more than what is actually said.

As conversational implicatures are a certain kind of inference that can be derived from an utterance, they are related to what Grice called the *Cooperative Principle and its maxims*. Given the fact that our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks (and would not be rational if they did), the remarks are characteristically cooperative efforts and each participant recognises in them a mutually accepted direction (1975:45). The Cooperative Principle and its maxims are reproduced here for the sake of reference, since I shall refer to it at many points and in different sections in this piece of research.

1) THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE:

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

1) THE MAXIM OF QUANTITY

(i) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)

(ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2) THE MAXIM OF QUALITY

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

(i) Do not say what you believe to be false

(ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

3) THE MAXIM OF RELEVANCE

Be relevant

4) THE MAXIM OF MANNER

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

(i) Avoid obscurity of expression

(ii) Avoid ambiguity

(iii) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)

(iv) Be orderly

(1975: 45-6)

Naturally, as Grice himself readily admits, people do not follow these guidelines to the letter, and here is where

conversational implicatures play their part. When a speaker violates or "flouts" one of the maxims, the hearer assumes that the speaker is nevertheless trying to be cooperative and looks for the meaning at some deeper level, and in doing so s/he makes an inference, namely a **conversational implicature**. And here we can bring irony to the foreground again: according to Grice (and his followers) irony is one of the prototypical examples in which a speaker is saying something which is obvious to the listener or audience as false. For instance, if after having had a car accident on his trip back home, A tells his wife

"That was a nice trip indeed!"

the wife will readily understand that A must be trying to get across some other proposition than the one he purports to be putting forward (since there is, besides, contextual evidence - the crashed car- to believe so). The most obviously related proposition in the case of irony is, for Grice, the contradictory one. Then, in this very simple example, the wife should reach the conclusion, by means of implicature, that the trip was not nice at all.

In spite of the indisputable fact that Grice's theory is illuminating, it can be said that his view of irony is not far from the classical view of it as "meaning the opposite of what is literally said", since he still seems to base the use of irony on conditions of truth or falsity, i.e., irony is a consequence of the violation of the Quality Maxim, and when this maxim is violated, the speaker is not telling the truth. But the research done in this work has found that irony can be conveyed through

the flouting of the other maxims and not exclusively the Quality Maxim. This point will be treated in chapter 5.

According to Grice, then, a speaker who wants to convey an ironic meaning will always make use of conversational implicatures and the listener will have to work out the presence of these implicatures. Paradoxically, Grice's parallel notion of conventional implicature may help us realise that this is not always the case. Consequently, I shall now continue the discussion on Grice's views by trying to explain the distinction between conventional and conversational implicature, for it seems reasonable to suggest that this discussion could throw some light on the possibility of existence of a conventionalised kind of irony.

3.3 Conventional and Conversational implicatures

It was explained in the previous section that conversational implicatures are triggered by the violation of some of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle. Grice specifies that the presence of a conversational implicature must be capable of being worked out. In order to work out the presence of a conversational implicature, the hearer will reply on:

- 1- the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved
- 2- the Cooperative Principle and its maxims
- 3- the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance
- 4- other items of background knowledge and,
- 5- the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants

and both participants know or assume this to be the case.
(1975: 50)

The general pattern Grice presents for the working of conversational implicature may, within this line of thought, very well be applied to the interpretation of irony. The pattern is the following:

<<He has said that p; there is no reason to suppose he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP; he could not be doing this unless he thought that q; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that q is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that q; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that q; and so he has implicated that q.>> (1975: 50)

There are, nevertheless, some cases in which the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated, helping them to determine what is said. Thus, for instance, if I say, "she is a woman, she, therefore, doesn't drive well", I have committed myself to it being the case that the fact of driving badly is a consequence of being a woman. This is what Grice has called a *conventional implicature*.

According to Grice, no instances of irony interpretation could be analysed in the light of conventional implicatures, since, by being ironic, a speaker is always violating the Quality maxim and, consequently, forces the listener to work out a new meaning for the utterance. This is something that I believe can be argued. One of the characteristics of conversational implicatures is, according to Grice, that they are all cancellable (1978: 115). This means that "to the form of words of the

utterance of which putatively implicates that *p*, it is admissible to add "but not *p*" , or "I do not mean to imply that *p*", and that it is contextually cancellable if one can find situations in which the utterance of the form of the words would simply not carry the implicature" (1978: 115-16).

Since Grice considers the inferences coming out after an ironic remark to be conversational implicatures, then we infer that all ironic interpretations could be cancelled. I, nevertheless, believe that there are some cases in which we could not cancel the ironic implicature, and in which we consequently could say that the implicature leading to the ironic interpretation is conventional, and not conversational.

3.3.1 Conventionalised irony

To be more accurate, we could speak of a kind of conventionalised implicatures for some cases of irony, for these implicatures were apparently conversational in an initial state, but their frequent use by the speakers to send an ironic message has made them conventional, in such a way that it is no longer necessary for the listeners to work out their meaning. Morgan writes about this kind of implicature (though not in connection with irony) and he calls it "short circuited implicature" (1978: 274).

Consider the following examples:

1- Somebody asks an obvious question, to which his interlocutor

answers:

"Is the Pope Catholic?"

Morgan (1978) presents this expression as one of the two or three expressions that Americans use to answer very obvious questions. This question is, at the same time, ironical because it is used as a mild sardonic criticism to mean that the question the other interlocutor made was rather stupid. Once more, the irony cannot be interpreted out of the opposite of the proposition; the irony here lies in the contrast between the answer expected by the listener and the actual answer given by the speaker, which is, in fact, another question. There is a contradiction of speech acts, and this is another valid strategy for conveying irony, as will be shown and discussed in 3.4. and 7.2.3.. It is a conventionalised type of irony because the interpretation is now always the same. Nobody who is competent in the English language will think that the speaker is really asking whether the Pope is Catholic or not.

2-

A: "I can lift a 200kg weight."

B: "Yes, and I'm Marie the Queen of Romania."

This is another of the conventionalised expressions used in an ironical way in English. By replying to A in that way, B means that s/he does not believe a word of what A says, i.e., he is conventionally implicating that A is a liar. Again, this is a sardonic, sarcastic answer in which we can observe an ironic

contrast between the expected answer or reaction and the actual reply given by B. There seems to be no other possibility of interpretation, for it is always very clear to the hearer that the speaker is not the Queen of Romania, and that s/he is consequently trying to convey a different meaning. On the other hand, the speaker in this case seems to be violating the Maxim of Relevance, for if we analyse the answer from a logical point of view, it seems to have no connection with what A said before. This logical opposition was then what originally triggered the implicature and, hence, the ironic interpretation. But, as this is an expression which has been used to convey an ironic meaning for a long time, now the implicature is "short-circuited", and it seems reasonable to suggest that it can not be cancelled; consequently, it can be considered as an instance of conventionalised irony. Brown and Yule (1983) indirectly write about this phenomenon when, in considering inferences as the "missing links" required to make an explicit connection between two apparently unconnected utterances, they write about "automatic" and "non-automatic" connections (1983: 259). The short-circuited implicature would then be an "automatic" kind of inference (though from the moment it becomes automatic, it ceases to be an inference and therefore requires no processing time and effort).

Morgan (1978) distinguishes two types of convention: *conventions of language*, that jointly give rise to the literal meanings of sentences; and *conventions of usage*, that govern the use of sentences, with their literal meanings, for certain

purposes. Examples 1 and 2 are clear instances of conventions of usage. We can speak, in these cases, of a convention specifying some particular expressions, though the convention here extends to the general strategy used. For instance, in example 1, the conventional strategy could be formulated in the following way: "Answer an obvious question with an even more obvious question, to convey that the first question was stupid and need not have been made". In example 2, the conventional strategy would be: "Reply to a lie with an even bigger lie to show that you are not being cheated".

My research has shown that in the "irony game" there are few cases (like the ones in examples 1 and 2) in which we can speak of conventionalised ironic expressions, but that there are more instances in which we can speak of conventionalised ironic strategies (these will be dealt with in detail in 7.3.3 (A.29)). "Strategy" is a key word in this study, which I am going to define and deal with in later chapters in more detail.

I now consider it necessary and appropriate to reflect upon the nature of a few more examples of irony in which the strategy, and not the expression itself, seems to have been conventionalised:

3- (taken from the television series *Three's Company*)

Jack: Can you give me an aspirin?

Room mate: What do you want it for?

Jack: To play golf with it.

Jack's answer cannot be said to be conventionalised as an ironical expression, though the strategy seems to be a common and conventionalized one not only in English but in other languages (like Spanish) as well. The strategy could be formulated: "Reply to a stupid question with an even more stupid answer". Again, we find here an opposition between question and answer, in which the ironic reply could not be analysed in terms of opposite propositions. The opposition is at a different level. Ironic speakers usually play with the absurd and ridiculous, and this is one instance in which this is done. It is absurd to say that one is going to play golf with an aspirin; absurd enough to make the listener aware of the fact that the speaker thinks his/her (the hearer's) previous utterance was ridiculous and silly. In this case, it cannot be said that the expression "to play golf with it" is always recognised as ironic, as it is the case with "Is the Pope catholic?", but "answering a stupid question with a stupid answer" can be said to be a recognized ironic strategy.

Another example that confirms the existence of this strategy can be appreciated in the following conversational exchange between Rose, Blanche and Dorothy (*The Golden Girls*):

4-

Blanche: This is good. This is all food that would have spoiled.

(They start eating and eat throughout)

Dorothy: I'm so glad that my date with Barry is tomorrow. The fat won't have time to show.

Rose: It won't?

Dorothy: No. It always takes a few days before it shows.

Rose: Where does it go in the meantime?

Dorothy: To Connecticut. How do I know where it goes?!

(GG, 1991: 28)

Here, the answer "To Connecticut" is the one that carries the implicature (which is now short-circuited) that the question was a stupid one. But the expression used could well have been "to Rome" or "to any other place", and the answer would still have been absurd and ironic. It is clear that it is the strategy which conveys the ironical criticism and not the words or particular expression.

5- A similar occurrence of the same strategy can be observed in the following conversation between Dorothy, Rose and Sophia (the "girls" are taking care of their neighbour's baby):

(Dorothy holds the baby. The baby cries)

Dorothy: There, there.

Rose: It's a colic. My children had it. You give them brandy.

Sophia: For colic?

Dorothy: Yes, After dinner. With a cigar. Rose, you give brandy for teething; you rub it on their gums.

Rose: Oh. I thought I gave it to them for colic. In their bottles. But my babies were very happy.

Sophia: Put it in my bottle; I'll be happy, too.

(GG, 1991: 43)

The whole situation and conversation is comic and presents instances of verbal irony, in one of which we can appreciate the use of the strategy previously discussed. When Dorothy says that

you give brandy to babies "after dinner, with a cigar", she is answering what she considers to be a stupid question with an even more stupid answer, and at the same time she is criticising Rose's ignorance for having put brandy in her babies' bottles. Again, the absurd answer shows the absurdity of the question or assertion made before. It is obviously ridiculous to think that Dorothy may be serious when saying that a brandy with a cigar is something good for babies' colics, so we can not say that the implicature that conveys the ironic meaning is cancellable in any case; consequently, it seems reasonable to conclude that the implicature has been "short circuited" and conventionalized, for the utterance in question will always be interpreted as an ironical utterance. A further analysis of these strategies is made in 7.3.3 (A.29).

6- Consider the use of sentences like:

"If she is pretty, then I'm the king of France."

Numberg (1981) gives a similar example to present it as an expression that involves irony and sarcasm. The formula for this kind of sentences is "If p, then q = not p", which, in plain words, means that the sentence "If she is pretty, I'm the king of France" means "She is not pretty" (or at least, "I don't believe her to be pretty"). The condition for this formula to always be valid as a means of conveying irony is that the main clause of the conditional sentence should carry an absurd proposition: in this case, the person uttering it is not the King of France, and even more, there is no present King of France,

which makes the utterance completely absurd. We are again facing a strategy which seems to have been conventionalised to express irony and that could be stated as follows: "When you do not agree with what is stated in the subordinate clause of a conditional sentence, tell a lie or say something absurd in the main clause to express your disagreement". The opposition between what the speaker asserts in the main clause (which is a lie) and the truth is what triggers the ironical interpretation of what is said in the subordinate clause. The listener should reason in the following way: "given the fact that what the speaker is saying in the main clause is not true, what he says in the subordinate clause of the same sentence can neither be true, or at least, has to be considered as absurd or ridiculous for the speaker". This reasoning seems to have been "short circuited" (given the wide and repetitive use of the formula to convey irony) and, consequently, has been incorporated as a conventional way to express irony.

Conventionalization is, thus, one of the aspects of the analysis, of which the concept of strategy seems to be an illuminating and clarifying element.

3.3.2 Further reflexions on the "conventionalisation" of irony

One of my secondary research questions when starting this study was whether I would find instances of lexicalised or grammaticalised irony. As was shown in the previous section,

some expressions (such as "Yes, and I'm Marie the Queen of Romania") seem to be always used in an ironical way, in which case we could speak of a conventionalisation of the words used in that case to be ironic, but it was also shown that, in most cases of conventionalisation, what is conventionalised is the strategy and not the words.

There are, however, certain expressions which seem to be always used in an ironical way. Take, for example, the expression *A likely story*, which always signifies something like "an unlikely story" or "I don't believe what you say". I believe we can say here that we are facing a case of conventionalised, lexicalised irony, since the ironic interpretation will always accompany these particular words, and not, for example, "*A possible story*", in which case the ironic interpretation is not the only interpretation one could give. Another expression that seems to be a case of established irony is quoted by Numberg (1981). Numberg points out that both Americans and English use the expression *not much* in an ironic way, to express scepticism about what somebody else has said, but only the English use *not many, Benny*, to indicate scepticism as to an assertion about quantity. In the case of *not much*, we perhaps cannot speak about conventionalized irony because it can also be used with other meanings, but in the case of *not many, Benny* we can, for it is always used to express the aforementioned scepticism.

M. Brevia Claramonte and J. García Alonso (1993), in a study of the slang used in the graffiti of a United States university, note that it is interesting how some slang words that now have

a positive meaning had a negative value corresponding to their literal or non-slang senses. These words are *awesome*, *groovy*, *cool* and *blast*. Thus *awesome* still means -in standard English- "frightening, inspiring terror", while it means something like "excellent, wonderful, thrilling" in slang. *Groovy* has the same slang sense, but it originally meant "routine, commonplace". This lexico-semantic phenomenon is known by the name of antiphrasis and is quite a productive process in the development of slang vocabulary. Brea Claramonte and García Alonso state that "this type of semantic changes is motivated by an underlying reaction on the part of the language user against the mainstream culture, by a desire to show irony, or by an internal urge to resort to humorous speech" (1993: 26). These examples are perhaps different from the previous ones, since, once they become established as slang forms, the intention of being ironic is perhaps lost, but, as the authors say, the original aim was to show irony and humour. Thus, I still believe we can say these are cases of lexicalised irony, and, what is more interesting, they can be considered to be cases of lexicalised "positive" irony (as will be defined in chapter 5 with respect to positive and negative politeness), for they are clear cases of words having an origin of negative meaning used to convey positive attitudes and meanings. Another expression that appears to be an instance of lexicalised "positive" irony is the expression *break a leg*, used by theatre people to wish an actor good luck before a performance. Here, something which taken literally is the expression of a bad wish, is used to convey a good wish for

the listener, and this is the only way of conveying it. It would not have the same ironic effect if the speaker said "break an arm", which shows that the verbal irony has been conventionalised and lexicalised. Booth (1974) speaks of this phenomenon as "stable irony" and illustrates his point by means of two examples in which the irony is firmly built into the usual terms for things: tall men nicknamed *Shorty* in western America, and blind men called *Men with a thousand eyes* in one part of India (1974: 40).

We may, then, speak of some very particular and punctual examples of lexicalized irony. In the course of this investigation, I have also come across certain words and expressions that show a tendency to be used ironically, though they cannot be considered as complete lexicalised or grammaticalised examples, because they can also be used in non-ironic contexts. I refer, for example, to the adjective *fine* or the verb *seem*. *Fine* appears to be a word preferred by English speakers for the expression of some prototypical examples of irony, such as the one presented in the previous chapter (section 2.3):

A: "You're a fine friend."

It seems to be the case that, when willing to be ironic, English speakers prefer to use *fine* and not, for instance, *good*. This does not mean that in a given situation somebody may say "you're a good friend" and not be ironic, but it does mean that in

general the most preferred adjective would be *fine*. Word order seems to be important here, for it appears to be the case that when somebody says "A fine friend you are", the utterance tends to be interpreted more in sarcastic terms than when it has the more normal order "you are a fine friend". R. Gibbs (1986), in fact, presents the former as "a sentence form that is conventionally used sarcastically". However, this preference for the adjective *fine* to be used with ironic meanings is observed only in relation to certain topics or words, for it is not usual to associate the "fine" of, e.g. "It's a fine day" with any ironic understatements.

Wayne Booth gives an example which I believe to be an illustration of the use of ironic *fine*, quoting Stendhall in *The Charterhouse of Parma*:

"The Marchese del Dongo was given a high position, and as he combined the most sordid avarice with a host of other *fine* qualities...". (1974: 67)

The same appears to occur with the verb *seem*. An example could be taken from my own recollection of an occasion on which I was invited to an outdoor barbecue at the University of Utah, U.S.A.. One of the guests was eating very much, without stopping and even without being able to speak with his friends, so one of his friends addressed him and said:

"It seems you're hungry"

Of course, this was considered a joke, and everybody laughed. Irony is conveyed here by means of "hedging". By saying that her

friend "seemed to" rather than "it was obvious" that he was hungry, the speaker was "softening" her possible criticism about her friend's greediness.

Another humorous and ironical example of the use of the verb *seem* is found in the following conversation exchange taken from *Yes, Minister*. Hacker (the Minister), in his idealistic search for "open government", has given express orders to release to the press a piece of information that will certainly threaten an Anglo-American Trade Agreement and that will surely lead him to the end of his career as a Minister if he does not change his mind:

Humphrey: The Minister and I believe in open government. We want to throw open windows and let in a bit of fresh air, isn't that right, Minister?

Arnold: Well Minister, it's a good party stuff, but it puts the Prime Minister in a very difficult situation personally.

Hacker: What about our commitment to open government?

Arnold: This seems to be the closed season for open government.

(YM, 1994 video episode: "Open Government")

More examples could be provided of these and other words which show a certain tendency to be used ironically, but the ones given are considered to be sufficient in order to signal or point to the fact that such a tendency exists for some words or expressions.

I shall now turn my attention to another of the prominent issues within pragmatic studies, namely, speech act theory, and

I shall try to look into the ways in which irony is connected to such a theory.

3.4 Irony and speech acts

In the famous lectures that were posthumously published as *How to do things with words* (1962), Austin set about demolishing the view that truth conditions should be considered as central to language understanding. He developed a general theory of illocutionary acts, which, in turn, became a central concern of general pragmatic theory. In saying something, Austin observes, we are also doing something, and, hence, three kinds of acts are simultaneously performed:

- (i) Locutionary act: the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference.
- (ii) Illocutionary act: the making of a statement, offer, promise, etc. in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it.
- (iii) Perlocutionary act: the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering a sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance.

(1962: 101-2)

The term *speech act* has come to refer exclusively to the second kind, i.e. the illocutionary act, since this is the one that seems to present the richest developments and

interpretations within pragmatic theory.

Searle's later systematization of Austin's work (1976), in which he proposes a typology of speech acts based on felicity conditions, became very influential. Austin and Searle's position can be formulated by saying that all utterances not only serve to express propositions, but also to perform actions. The illocutionary act or, more simply, the speech act, is at a privileged level within these actions.

In the framework of irony studies, the most interesting type of speech acts would be what Searle called *indirect speech acts*. Searle demonstrates that "in hints, insinuations, irony and metaphor, to mention a few examples, the speaker's utterance meaning and the sentence meaning come apart in various ways" (1975: 59).

Searle also indicates that an important class of indirect speech acts is that in which the speaker utters a sentence, means what he says, but also means something more. That is, a sentence that contains the illocutionary force indicators for one kind of illocutionary act can be uttered to perform, in addition, another type of illocutionary act. This opens up our spectrum of possibilities in a considerable way for the analysis of irony. We have already seen that the ironic speaker/writer sometimes does not mean what he says (as in the prototypical examples). There are some other times, however, in which, according to the findings of this research, the speaker does mean what he says and s/he also means something else. This can be certified by some of the examples that have been presented so far, as well as by

the following ones:

1- A wife who is arguing with her husband and suddenly says:

"I wish I had an understanding husband."

The wife means what she says, because she really wants to have a more understanding husband, but, at the same time she is criticising her husband by implying that he is not an understanding person. The irony is conveyed here by means of the presupposition coming out of the expression "I wish I had" -which presupposes that "I don't have"- (in fact it can be said that the irony here is derived from the conventional implicatures coming out of the words used, producing an "implicature-free" kind of verbal irony, a type that will be proposed in 7.2.2). Besides, she is stating something and, at the same time, is being reproachful to her husband, which illustrates that Searle's point discussed above is also valid in cases of irony, i.e., an illocutionary act that is meant but nevertheless uttered in such a way as to perform another illocutionary act at the same time.

2- (Taken from *The Golden Girls*)

Blanche: I don't need a song!. I just want to be young and beautiful and healthy again.

Dorothy: Blanche, that's what we all want.

Blanche: I know -but I deserve it. (1991: 178)

Blanche means what she says, and so she is "stating" something,

but she is also implying that the other girls do not deserve to be young, beautiful and healthy, which constitutes a witty ironical criticism. Again, the irony here is not conveyed through conversational implicature but through presupposition, in this case coming out of the word "but" (a reflexion that should be connected to the analysis made in 3.3.1 and 7.2.2).

We have thus seen that irony can also manifest itself at the illocutionary level of the speech act. There are instances in which the irony is interpreted out of an opposition of speech acts, showing, again, a manifestation that is set apart from the conventional idea of an opposition of propositions. Consider the case in which a teacher is angry at her students' behaviour (they are talking and not paying attention to her explanations), and so she says in a loud voice and showing annoyance in her expression:

- 3- "May I continue with my explanations?"
or: "Would you allow me to carry on?"

She is being ironical by asking for permission to go ahead, but implicating that she should not be doing this, since she is the teacher, and, in general, in such a situation, it is the students who should be asking for permission to talk. Then we could say that the teacher is using the "opposite" or, better, a contradictory speech act, for she is asking for permission when she should be giving an order. The interpretation of this tells

us that she changes the speech act ironically in order to indirectly criticize the students' behaviour. Robin Lakoff (1972) writes about the use of "sarcastic *please*" when explaining that "if an officer in the Army (a subculture with special status-related rules) gives a command to a private, he will not normally preface his command with *please*. "Although in most English speaking groups the use of *please* prefaced to an imperative is a mark of politeness, to use *please* in this situation will be interpreted as sarcastic" (1972: 911). In this case, the officer would be making an apparent request when he should be making a command instead. Again, it can be seen that the opposition lies in the speech act and not in the proposition.

These last examples lead us to the reflexion that expressing opposition seems to be something inherent in verbal irony, but this opposition does not necessarily have to be found at the level of the proposition . It may be made manifest at other levels, such as that of the speech act, as I am trying to show herein.

H. Haverkate, in his article "A Speech Act Analysis of Irony" presents the following example:

4- "Could you do me the favour of shutting up?" (1990: 85)

which is an ironical way of telling someone to stop talking. The question is the explicit act, the request is the implicit one. In fact, the question is a rhetorical one, for it is not expected to be answered (we have already seen and shall see later that

rhetorical questions are good and accepted strategies to convey irony). Both examples 3 and 4 are also examples of Negative Politeness used to convey irony, a fact that will be discussed carefully in chapter 5, and which has to do with Research Hypothesis n° 8. A similar instance could be given by the following remark, made by a mother to her son after having asked him to make his bed and seeing the son's slowness of response:

"Why don't you take your time and make the bed?"

The mother is asking a rhetorical question, and, at the same time she is trying to urge her son to make the bed by being sarcastic about his sluggishness. What she really means is something like:

"Come on, hurry up and do it".

Let us now illustrate this co-occurrence of speech acts (an explicit and an implicit one) by means of another example from the corpus. The aforementioned first episode of the series "Yes, Minister" finishes with an ironical remark by Humphrey (the Minister's secretary). Humphrey is a witty character who always makes the Minister do what he wants. The situation is as follows: the Minister (Hacker) gave the order to publish a Manifesto (in the name of his "open government") that would seriously damage Britain's relations with the United States. Then Hacker was informed of the Prime Minister's annoyance at having taken such a decision without having gone through the proper channels first. Hacker realises he has made a mistake and thinks it is now the end of his career since the Manifesto will be published at noon that very same day. Humphrey had blocked this publication without telling Hacker, but when he sees Hacker

in such an embarrassing situation, he tells him that he "had made a mistake" and, consequently, had not allowed the Manifesto to be published. Hacker, of course, feels relieved, but in order not to show it (and consequently not to acknowledge he "put his foot in it"), he says:

Hacker: That's O.K. Humphrey. After all, we all make mistakes

Humphrey: Yes, Minister.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Humphrey's answer (with a strong falling stress on the word "yes") apparently shows acceptance and submission to what the Minister says, but, in fact, it is an ironical remark that shows no submission at all, for he is implying that it was the Minister who made the mistake and not himself. This happens all through the series; Humphrey pretends to accept everything Hacker says and orders, but he actually does whatever he wants, and, consequently, it is he who gives the orders. Therefore, the title of this programme, "Yes, Minister", is completely ironical and representative of the irony that is found in all the episodes.

Verbal irony can thus be expressed through a wide variety of illocutionary acts. I shall now proceed to analyse irony in the light of Searle's typology of speech acts.

3.4.1 Irony and Searle's typology of speech acts

Haverkate (1990) classifies irony in accordance with the taxonomic criteria proposed by Searle (1976) for speech acts. Searle proposes five basic classes of speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. Haverkate notes that irony manifests itself predominantly in the performance of assertives, but also presents examples of directive, commissive and expressive irony. He excludes declarative speech acts because they are performed by means of performative formulas to which no sincerity condition applies (1990: 89). I shall briefly illustrate his typology by means of the following examples:

- a) Assertive irony: One of the examples Haverkate considers is when a speaker addresses the hearer to express his anger at the impolite behaviour of a third person and says:

"I love people with good manners."

Haverkate cleverly explains that, here, the speaker does not intend to mean the opposite of what he says (i.e., "I hate people with good manners") but, rather, to implicate that the person who has aroused his anger does not belong to the class of people with good manners (1990: 92).

- b) Directive irony: An example of directive irony (i.e., irony expressed through a directive) could be given by a mother who is tired of telling her son not to walk barefooted (for he

could catch a cold) and the son never obeys, so she says :

"Very well, keep on walking barefooted!"

This example fits in rather accurately within classical definitions of irony, for what the mother really means is "That is not very well" and "Do not keep on walking barefooted", though, when seen from the standpoint of speech act theory, this presents richer possibilities of analysis.

- c) **Commissive irony:** By making use of the syntactic structure of commissives, a speaker can perform an ironic commissive speech act in order to, for instance, intimidate the hearer. It then takes the form of a rhetorical question, as in:

"Do you want me to throw you out of the room?"

- d) **Expressive irony:** Paradigmatic cases of expressive speech acts are "to thank", "to congratulate" or "to condole". A speaker could ironically utter the following:

"I thank you for having been so cooperative."

in a context in which it is evident that the addressee did not cooperate at all. Haverkate states that "there seems to be a general constraint on the ironic performance of expressive speech acts, namely, the constraint that irony is incompatible with those acts that serve to convey feelings of sympathy" (1990: 110). I nevertheless believe this is not always true, since in some particular circumstances (in which there is a close relationship between two friends and there is an atmosphere in which joking is expected and likely to occur)

someone could say to a friend who has won a prize:

"I condole with you on your winning of the First Prize."

This has an ironic effect, and it is a case of what I shall later (chapter 5) call "positive irony".

Haverkate's illustration of verbal irony in relation to the different types of speech act shows a great deal of reflexion on the nature of irony and is of great help to any analyst. There are, nevertheless, some points in his argumentation that I believe can be refuted, and I shall, consequently, argue against them in the following section.

3.4.1.1. Argumentation against two points in Haverkate's claims: Testing Research Hypothesis n° 3

As was specified above, Haverkate excludes declarative speech acts from his typology, claiming that the sincerity condition does not apply to this type of act, and, consequently, no ironic interpretation could be derived from them. There are two points in this assumption of Haverkate's that I would like to argue against, given that the analysis of the data in the corpus has thrown evidence against them:

1) It is not necessary that the sincerity condition apply in all cases of irony. This would mean (and in fact is what Haverkate means) that we can only attain irony through the violation of the quality maxim. We have seen in examples 1

and 2 in the last section that sometimes we can be ironic and sincere at the same time (and we shall see in chapter 5 how we can be ironic by flouting other maxims than the Quality Maxim). The argumentation against this point will be carried out in detail in chapter 5, for it is in close connection to Politeness Theory. I shall here concentrate on the argumentation concerning the following point.

2) Declarative speech acts can also be used to convey irony. There is a very interesting example in *The Complete Yes, Minister* (the written version of the television series). In this passage the Minister's wife ironically complains about the fact that her husband and his political adviser are together most of the time:

<<The phone rang. I grabbed it. It was Frank Weisel, my political adviser, saying that he was on his way over. I told Annie, who wasn't pleased. "Why doesn't he just move in?" she asked bitterly. Sometimes I just don't understand her. I patiently explained to her that, as my political adviser, I depend on Frank more than anyone. "Then why don't you marry him?" she asked. "I now pronounce you man and political adviser. Whom politics has joined let no wife put asunder.>> (1989: 12).

It seems reasonable to assert that Hacker's wife is making use of sardonic echoic irony by reproducing the performative (declarative) act of *marrying* when she says "I now pronounce you man and political adviser. Whom politics has joined let no wife put asunder". She is trying to ridicule the situation of mutual

dependency existing between Hacker and his political adviser, and, to that purpose, she substitutes some "key" words for the normal words that would be used in a real marriage ceremony, and this is one of the aspects (together with context, tone of voice, etc.) that allows the ironic interpretation. Thus, this example shows that Haverkate's statement claiming that "declarative speech acts can not be used to convey irony" can be argued against by using precisely the claims made by speech act theory. In other words, this is simply one more case of "indirect speech act", in which the illocutionary force indicators for one kind of illocutionary act can be uttered to perform another type of illocutionary act.

By simulating the performative act of marrying, Hacker's wife is, in fact, performing an assertive kind of speech act, which could be materialised in the following words: "I'm tired of your being together most of the time and, consequently, of not having time for myself and my husband to lead a normal, private life". I sincerely see no difference between this instance of indirect speech act and the other examples presented by Haverkate under the headings of assertive, commissive, directive and expressive indirect speech acts conveying irony. The only difference with the examples presented by Haverkate is that the indirect speech act here is realised neither through assertives, nor through commissives, directives or expressives, but through a declarative speech act which gives evidence in favour of the second part of my Research Hypothesis n° 3 (i.e., the part that states that irony can manifest itself even through declarative

speech acts), and which, consequently, is proof against Haverkate's assumption in his article "A speech act analysis of irony".

As was stated above, Haverkate's analysis and typology of irony are very interesting and rather illuminating, but there is still much more to be said about irony, and I believe this "much more" can be better said if we use the concept of strategy, on which my typology (chapter 7) will be based.

3.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have tried to place irony within a pragmatic framework for the present study. I have analysed irony in relation to Grice's Cooperative Principle and implicatures, as well as in relation to speech acts.

I have also tried to search for conventional uses of irony, and it has been concluded that there are indeed certain cases of "conventionalised" irony (that have undergone the "short-circuit" process), some of which can be said to be examples of lexicalisation of irony, while some others present what I understand to be a conventionalisation of the strategy used. This has, then, given us qualitative evidence to accept Research Hypothesis n°2, which states that irony can be conveyed not only through conversational implicature, but also through conventional implicature.

The analysis of irony within speech act theory has permitted

to show that irony can manifest itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech act. It could also be shown and argued, contrary to Haverkate (1990), that irony can manifest itself through declarative (performative) speech acts as well. This is precisely what was stated at the beginning (chapter one) in Research Hypothesis n° 3.

But there are many aspects of irony that have not been mentioned yet. At the beginning of this chapter, it was indicated that it was necessary for any pragmatic account of language to have access to some psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic information. That is why we will now (chapter 4) look into irony in the light of some psycholinguistic theories, including Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory, and that is also why a sociolinguistic approach such as Politeness Theory will be discussed and analysed in chapter 5.

Chapter 4: IRONY AS A PSYCHIC AND
PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PHENOMENON

<<To be ironic means that one is conscious that one's own existence is itself a contradiction.>>

R. Harvey Brown, *Dialectical Irony, Literary Form, and Sociological Theory*

4.1 Irony and the mind

Irony is as much a psychic phenomenon as it is a linguistic one. Many psychologists and psycholinguists have approached the study of the subject in their search for the intricate mental mechanisms whereby meanings are conveyed. Indeed, irony always seems to be a proof of elaborate thoughts and delicate strategies occurring both in the mind of the ironist and of the person or people who have to interpret it.

Psychologists such as David Rumelhart (1979) have focused part of their research on issues such as the comprehension of literal and conveyed meanings, trying to state whether this comprehension is fundamentally different in both cases. Rumelhart notices that figurative speech appears in children's speech from the very beginning and so argues that "the processes involved in the comprehension of nonliteral speech are part of our language production and comprehension equipment from the very start" and that "far from being a special aspect of linguistic or pragmatic competence, it is the very basis for this

competence" (1979:81). He does not agree with Grice in that language is comprehended by first computing the literal meaning and then, if it violates some rule of conversation, somehow calculating the conveyed meaning. He holds the hypothesis that indirect requests, for example, can be understood as quickly as direct ones and that the processes involved in the comprehension of non-figurative language are no less dependent on knowledge of the world than those involved in figurative language. For Rumelhart thinks that there are also conventions to understand literal meaning and that literal meaning also depends on context.

Sigmund Freud approached the subject of irony in his well-known analysis of jokes in *Jokes and their relation to the Unconscious* (1905). I shall deal with his findings in a more detailed manner later in this chapter, for I consider humour to be an important aspect of irony that cannot be left unattended.

Several theories about verbal irony and sarcasm have been set forward by linguists, which have helped psychologists in their research. I refer to Sperber & Wilson's *Echoic Mention* (1981) (later *Echoic Interpretation*) Theory, Clark & Gerrig's *Pretence Theory* (1984), Sperber & Wilson's *Relevance Theory* (1986), Kreuz & Glucksberg's *Echoic Reminder Theory* (1989). I shall try to analyse all these theories and argue some points in them that do not seem to be highly convincing. Every one of the theories seems to point to a given aspect or feature of irony, but none of them seems to cover all possible occurrences of the phenomenon. None of them seems to be comprehensive enough to account for all cases of irony.

In particular, I shall discuss the points that have to do with Research Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 (stated in the introductory chapter), and I shall try to give evidence for them by means of examples taken from the corpus.

4.2 Echoic Mention Theory

Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in their 1981 article *Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction* claim that both the traditional account and Grice's account of irony fail to explain why an ironic utterance should ever be preferred to its literal counterpart. According to Sperber & Wilson, Grice's account also fails to make explicit exactly how the move from literal meaning to conversational implicature is made in the case of irony, as well as to show that the conversational implicatures involved in irony are of the same type as the more standard cases of conversational implicature (1981: 296).

Sperber & Wilson try to show that there is a necessary (though not sufficient) semantic condition for an utterance to be ironical, and they intend to explain why ironical utterances are made and why they occasionally (but not always) implicate the opposite of what they literally say. They hold that researchers on the topic should be looking for psychological mechanisms that can account for the effects of ironic utterances and their interrelationships. The whole notion of figurative meaning is rejected by these authors, on the grounds that almost every utterance can be figurative and ambiguous, having possible

semantic interactions among its individual ambiguous constructions.

The essence of Sperber & Wilson's 1981 theory of verbal irony is laid upon the distinction drawn in philosophy between the use and the mention of an expression. "Use of an expression involves reference to what the expression refers to; mention of an expression involves reference to the expression itself" (1981: 303). The authors' explanation that "when the expression mentioned is a complete sentence, it does not have the illocutionary force it would standardly have in a context where it was used" shows that the remark in a) is uttered in b) without actually being made:

a) "What is irony?"

b) "What is irony" is the wrong question"

(1981: 305)

One type of mention of a proposition is echoic mention. Ironic utterances are presented by Sperber & Wilson as cases of echoic mention. Basic to Sperber & Wilson's theory is the claim that all cases of irony involve mention of a proposition which is interpreted as echoing the opinion that the speaker wants to characterise as ludicrously inappropriate or irrelevant, as can be seen in the following situation: a person invites his friend for a walk considering that, in his opinion, "the weather will be lovely". Later, they go for a walk, and it starts to rain. The friend then ironically echoes his remark by saying "What lovely weather!". In Sperber and Wilson's view, the mentioned propositions are ones that have been or might have been actually

entertained by someone. In my opinion, this gives the characterisation of irony a rather loose interpretation, and this is something I will discuss in this chapter. The opening move in the line of argumentation of this chapter is thus to argue against Sperber and Wilson's thesis on the always-echoic character of irony. Another aspect to be considered, discussed and argued within this theory is the authors' statement that, in most cases, irony has victims and that it always conveys a derogatory attitude.

Echoic Mention Theory was subsequently tested by Jorgensen, Miller & Sperber by means of a reading comprehension test, the results of which were presented in the article *Test of the Mention Theory of Irony* (1984). The test involved anecdotes that satisfied the traditional criterion for irony but could include or omit antecedents for echoic mention. Results favoured the mention theory of irony. However, in my opinion, this cannot be presented as a proof that all ironic utterances are echoic. The fact that the echoic mention theory seems to be a better theory than the traditional one (stating that ironic utterances mean "the opposite" of their literal meanings), does not imply that it is the best theory or the one that covers all the versatility of the phenomenon.

Before discussing the points that I consider to be arguable in this theory, it is necessary to say something about the evolution of Sperber & Wilson's ideas of verbal irony as they are shown in their subsequently developed *Relevance Theory*.

4.3 Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory has to do with cognitive psychology and the study of reasoning. Sperber & Wilson claim that human cognition has a goal: we pay attention only to those pieces of information which seem to be relevant. This single property, *relevance*, is seen as the key to human communication and cognition.

In Relevance Theory, verbal communication is understood as involving a speaker producing an utterance as a public interpretation of one of his/her thoughts, and a hearer constructing a mental interpretation of this utterance. Stated differently, an utterance is an interpretive expression of a thought of the speaker's, and the hearer makes an interpretive assumption about the speaker's informative intention. Sperber & Wilson state that they see "no reason to postulate a convention, presumption, maxim or rule of literalness to the effect that this interpretation must be a literal reproduction. How close the interpretation is, and in particular when it is literal, can be determined on the basis of the principle of relevance" (1986: 231). From the standpoint of Relevance Theory, then, there is no reason to think that the optimally relevant interpretive expression of a thought is always the most literal one. Speakers are expected to aim at optimal relevance, not at literal truth. Besides, the optimal interpretive expression of a thought should require as little processing effort as possible.

As regards irony, these authors argue that it involves an interpretive relation between the speaker's thought and

attributed thoughts or utterances. But apart from all these theoretical considerations that are useful to place verbal irony within the framework of this cognitive theory, irony here is treated basically in the same way as in the authors' previous and aforementioned articles. The argument in favour of echoic interpretation is put forward once more. They restate their previous ideas by saying that an echoic utterance need not interpret a precisely attributable thought: "it may echo the thought of a certain kind of person or of people in general" (1986: 238). By doing this, a speaker can express his own attitude to the thought echoed; that is why Sperber & Wilson argue that verbal irony invariably involves the implicit expression of an attitude. Specifically, the relevance of an ironical utterance invariably depends on the information it conveys about the speaker's attitude to the opinion echoed. To all this argumentation, the authors add the following remark: "the attitude expressed by an ironical utterance is invariably of the rejecting or disapproving kind. The speaker dissociates herself from the opinion echoed and indicates that she does not hold it herself" (1986: 239).

The only difference in the treatment of irony between Relevance Theory and Sperber & Wilson's previous proposal (Echoic Mention Theory) is the clarification made by them in one of the back notes of the book (note 25, p.263), in which they state that they now realise that the notion of "mention" does not really stretch to cover the full range of cases they propose to handle. "Mention" is a self-referential use of language, and, as such,

it requires full linguistic or logical identity between representation and original. They therefore explain that they have abandoned the term "mention" in favour of the more general term "interpretation".

Two more of the arguments put forward by this theory include: a) the possibility of expressing oneself ironically as being a logical consequence of verbal communication rather than of some extra level of competence; b) the fact that there is a continuum of cases rather than a dividing line between ironic utterances and other echoic utterances, i.e., irony involves no departure from a norm and no transgression of a rule, convention or maxim (a claim that is against Grice's view of the problem).

Sperber & Wilson reconfirm their position towards irony in a later article called *On Verbal Irony* (1992), in which they claim that considerations of relevance lie at the heart of verbal communication, and, consequently, they hold that Relevance Theory is the best theoretical framework available for the explanation of verbal irony.

4.3.1 Discussion of Sperber & Wilson's ideas about irony: argumentation testing Research Hypotheses 4 and 5

As was said above, Sperber and Wilson's conception of irony opens up a wider scope of possibilities for irony interpretation than the one opened by the traditional conception, and thus it allows many more cases of irony to fit within a theory. Diane Blakemore, a follower of Sperber and Wilson's theory, shows this by means of examples of irony that would be very difficult to be

labelled as meaning the opposite of their propositions (something I have also done in chapter 2). Two of such examples are:

a) "Did you remember to water the garden?"

produced on a very rainy day;

b) "Oh! to be in England,

Now that April's there."

produced on a cold wet day during an English spring. (1992: 165)

In spite of the clear step forward given by this new formulation of the problem, I believe that some aspects of this interpretation could still be argued, and this is what I shall try to justify in the following four sections.

4.3.1.1 Are all cases of verbal irony echoic?

The opinions or thoughts that are being echoed are not always so clearly recognised or traced. In many ironical utterances, there seems to be no previous opinion or expression being mentioned. It is true that Sperber and Wilson say (as was quoted above) that sometimes the ironic utterance may echo the "thought of people in general" (1986: 238), but then it can be argued that any utterance could be echoic because any thought may be in the minds of people in general. So the fact of being echoic would not only be a characteristic of ironic utterances, but of all possible utterances. Consequently, for ironic utterances, the condition of being echoic would not be a very

revealing discovery. Martin (1992) points to the problem this theory creates by presenting the following example:

<<Suppose that, leaving my apartment in the usual way, I trip and sprain my ankle. *Oh, great. That's nice!*, I say. Is it reasonable to claim that I am making fun of the sort of person who treats a sprained ankle as a bit of luck?>> (1992: 80)

Martin then concludes that, in such cases of irony, we are not echoing any type of person or any illusory type of mind; we are simply angry at the way things are, at the way fate conspires against us, a fact that leads him to conclude that "it is not always the (real or imagined) originator of the opinion echoed who is the target of the irony: the target can well be reality itself, which makes the echoed opinion false or irrelevant" (1992: 81).

The findings in the research done for this thesis (of which I shall present the quantitative results in chapter 7) show that, indeed, many instances of irony may fall within echoic interpretation, but many others may not. I shall illustrate this by presenting some examples in the corpus which can clearly be considered as displaying echoic irony, and by presenting the counterexamples immediately after.

4.3.1.1.1 Some examples of echoic irony found in the corpora

I shall here present some of the discourse chunks in the corpus which can be unequivocally identified as cases of echoic verbal irony. Consider, first, the following two examples taken from the television series *Yes, Minister*:

1- Hacker (the Minister) had asked Humphrey (his Secretary) to write some proposals (which Humphrey was, in fact, reluctant to write) and, as it involved heavy work, Humphrey had to stay working all night and could not sleep. When he arrived at his office the following day, he looked tired. After reading the proposals to the Minister and telling him he had to work all night, Hacker says:

Hacker: It must have been quite a night.

to which Humphrey replies:

Humphrey: Yes, Minister, quite a night.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: *Big Brother*)

I believe the irony here is clear and does not need much explanation. It is evident that Humphrey is echoing the Minister to mean that it was a tiring night indeed, and to express, by means of understatement, that he was not happy having to stay overnight to work.

2- The following chunk of dialogue can not be understood as ironic if we do not know in advance that, in a previous moment of the episode, Humphrey told Hacker that he could not give him certain information about the previous Minister because "his lips were sealed". Knowing this, it is easy to see why Hacker is now being ironic:

Humphrey: Where did you get those proposals from?

Hacker: Humphrey, my lips are sealed.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: *Big Brother*)

The Minister is taking his revenge by now keeping some information away from Humphrey, who had previously done the same to Hacker. Thus, by repeating Humphrey's own words, he is being ironic and tries to tell Humphrey that now he has the right to be silent about issues he considers are none of Humphrey's business. Again, the Echoic Theory of irony seems to be appropriate for the description of the irony involved in this case.

3- Consider now the following conversational exchange between Dorothy and Blanche, in which Dorothy is sarcastic towards Blanche by repeating Blanche's ideas, though not the exact words previously uttered by her:

Dorothy: Yeah, I've been sitting here looking through the book,
and I can't believe how many of my classmates are gone.

Blanche: Hmm...

Dorothy: (Looks at book)
I mean, look. Frank Bonitardi. Tight end on the
football team. Heart attack. Dead.

Blanche: Well, Dorothy, don't think of it as Frank being dead.
Just think of it as God telling Frank to go deep.

Dorothy: (Back to book)
Oh... David Brittingham...

Blanche: What happened to him?

Dorothy: God told David to drive into a wall at eighty miles an
hour.

(GG, 1991: 132)

Dorothy's answer shows scorn for Blanche's previous suggestion

as to the way she should look at her friend Frank's death, and, to that purpose, she echoes her ideas in a particularly ironic manner which is intended to be a manifestation of her discontent with such ideas, and which is evidently humorous to the audience. This is one more case in which there can be no argument against the echoic thesis.

4- In the following example, taken from *The London Lund Corpus*, two friends are holding a long telephone conversation. On repeated occasions (before the part reproduced here), they have criticised a person called Damian, saying they disagree with those who love him or think he is valuable as a friend.

```

B      1212^I en_joyed . I ^still re!m\ember# /
B      1112^that !{f\irst 'arts 'thing I did) l\ast 'year# /
A      1112it was ^[dhi: ?@m ?@m] the :K\enwood 'one# /
A      1112^w\asn't it# /
B      1112^n\o# /
B      1112it was the ^one bef\ore 'that# /
B      1112I ^think 'Robert pro'duced (\one) be:fore 'you /
B      1112c\ame# /
B      1112*it ^was the lone of [@m] . !M\atjev## /
A      1112*^ah y\es#;- -*; /
A      1112"^oh y\es# . /
A      1112^y\es# /
A      1112+^y\es#+ /
A      1112**^y\es##** /
B      1112and ^I "!!\oved 'that# /
B      1112and +^every+body _else was being so !st\upid a'bout/ /
B      1112it# /
B      1112**in^cluding** a'gain :dear 'Dan :D\amian# /
B      2012[@m] *. ( - giggles) /
A      1112*^y/es# /
A      1112((^[m]# . /
A      1112^y=es# . /
A      1112^y\es#))* /

```

(LLC, 9.1)

Although there is no part in the dialogue where anybody referred

to Damian as "dear Damian", it can be said that B is making use of echoic irony to speak of him, since in this case (according to Sperber & Wilson) he would be echoing the supposed thoughts of the people who love Damian and who think he is dear to them. This case fits not only within echoic theory but also within the classical-traditional formulation of irony, for it can be said that the speaker here means the opposite of his proposition, namely, that "Damian is not a dear person to him" or that Damian is not "his cup of tea".

The examples of echoic irony found in the different corpora will be quantitatively analysed in chapter 8. I shall now turn to the more interesting cases to which no echoic interpretation can be given and shall try to discuss and argue against Sperber & Wilson's claim that echoic-interpretation theory holds good for all cases of verbal irony.

4.3.1.1.2 Counterexamples: non-echoic irony

Consider the following dialogue between Dorothy and Blanche (from *The Golden Girls*) in which Blanche, who is very worried about her age and always wants to be young and sexy, is following an exercise video on television because she wants to be fit and look attractive for her boyfriend, who happens to be many years her junior:

1-

Blanche: Oww... my back

Dorothy: Blanche, are you all right?

Blanche: No. But I have to go on. No pain, no gain. I have to look good for Dirk. A man his age is used to a trim body with a good tone

Dorothy: Then buy him a princess phone

(GG, 1991: 67)

Dorothy's last remark is ironical in that it implicates that no matter how hard Blanche tries to be fit and youthful, she will never be able to look as young as Dirk. There is even a further interpretation that leads the watcher or reader to realise that Dorothy does not approve of Blanche's relationship with so young a man (which can more clearly be seen throughout the episode). This, I believe, is an example of irony, but it does not seem to be a case of echoic mention. I do not see what expression or thought the ironic utterance "then buy him a princess phone" is echoing. According to Sperber and Wilson's echoic theory, in this case, the ironic words used by Dorothy should have been previously used or thought of by Blanche, which does not seem to be the case. The irony here lies in the absurdity of Dorothy's conclusion, which should make the hearer (Blanche, in this case) infer that Blanche's aspirations of being younger are also absurd. Dorothy implies that the nearest thing to a trim body with a good tone that Blanche can give Dirk is "a princess phone" and not Blanche herself, consequently implicating that Blanche will never look younger. Dorothy is ridiculing Blanche, but she is not doing it by echoing any words said by her before; on the contrary, she is using a new expression and idea ("then buy him a princess phone") to ironically criticise Blanche.

Consider this other piece of ironic discourse, in which B. Russell is bitterly criticising some religious ideas:

2-

<<According to St Thomas the soul is not transmitted with the semen, but is created afresh with each man. There is, it is true, a difficulty: when a man is born out of wedlock, this seems to make God an accomplice in adultery. This objection, however, is only specious. There is a grave objection which troubled St. Augustine, and that is as to the transmission of original sin. It is the soul that sins, and if the soul is not transmitted, but created afresh, how can it inherit the sin of Adam? This is not discussed by St. Thomas.>>

(BR, 1958: 40)

The remark "this seems to make God an accomplice in adultery" is highly sarcastic and ironic, but does not appear to be echoing any person's thought or utterance¹. Russell is indeed criticising and ridiculing St. Thomas' religious ideas, but does not make use of his words or previous thoughts to convey the irony in this case. Russell's comment is rather a sardonic conclusion reached by himself (and by no other person previously) in order to show his critical intention to the reader. This conclusion is ironic because of the contradiction that it seems to show between the ideas supposedly held by the church and the logical conclusion at which an analyst of these ideas arrives, i.e. that God is an accomplice in adultery, a conclusion which would not be consciously supported by St. Thomas or by any other religious person.

There is, however, one instance in this passage in which it

¹ We can see here one more instance in which the verb "seem" is used for ironic comments; see 3.3.2

can be said that Russel is using echoic irony, and that is when he says that "there is a grave objection which troubled St. Augustine...". Here it appears that the objection was grave for St. Augustine but not for Russell, in which case it can be interpreted as an echoic mention of St. Augustine's words, which are thought to be ridiculous by Russell.

Another example, which I believe to be in favour of the argument set forward in Hypothesis n° 4 , showing that all cases of irony are not echoic, is the following (taken from the Video episodes "Yes, Minister"):

3-

Humphrey: Do sit down Bernard. Ministers come, and Ministers go... It is our duty to fight for the Department's money despite his own panic reaction.

Bernard: But, I mean, how can he overcome panic?

Humphrey: Politicians like to panic. They need activity. It's their substitute for achievement.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: The Economy Drive)

Humphrey's last remark is pungent and ironic, though, again, it does not seem to be echoing anybody's thought or comment. He is only trying to say that Ministers never achieve anything, and he is looking down on them as idiots that have to find something to be occupied with (panic in this case), considering they never do anything important. Humphrey's remark is ironic here by presenting the absurdity of being busy with an "activity" like panic, which, in fact, can not be considered an activity for a Minister, and consequently serves his mocking intentions. He is ridiculing the Minister with his (Humphrey's) own words and

thoughts; he is not repeating or echoing any utterance or thought previously produced by the Minister. In no part of the episode is it shown or even suggested that the Minister says or thinks himself that "panic is his substitute for achievement"; on the contrary, Hacker thinks he is doing well and that he is going to change the old bureaucratic structure of the government with his revolutionary ideas. Humphrey, thus, is using his own pungent thought to be ironic, and he attains his goal considerably well without echoing anybody. A foreseen counter argument by a supporter of echoic interpretation theory could be that in this case (as well as in all the counterexamples presented here) the speaker (Humphrey in this example) is echoing his own thoughts. But such a reasoning would imply that every possible utterance is echoic and ironic, an implication that sheds no light on the further exploration of the phenomenon of irony. I, thus, consider it necessary to try to make a more profound analysis of verbal irony by taking into account other possibilities for its realisation. I firmly believe that echoic mention or interpretation is only one more of the strategies that a speaker/writer has at his disposal to convey irony, as was shown to be the case with "using the opposite proposition" (see 2.4.2) and as will be argued in chapter 8.

After the above analysis, it seems reasonable to suggest that the examples presented here display evidence in favour of Research Hypothesis n°4, which claims that not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention or interpretation. An account of all the cases of non-echoic irony found in the

corpus will be made in chapter 7, in order to observe their frequency of occurrence as compared to echoic cases.

4.3.1.2 Does verbal irony always convey a derogatory attitude?

Another point that can be argued in Sperber & Wilson's approach to the subject of irony is their claim about the derogatory attitude which is always conveyed by irony. It is true that irony is a mode of expression that tends to convey ridicule, and that it is principally used as a device for criticism, but in the present piece of research I have found cases in which irony can convey praise and, even more, I have also found examples in which irony conveys neither criticism nor praise. This last finding could be proof against Sperber and Wilson's argument on the attitudinal character of irony. Instances have been found of verbal irony that seem to express no particular attitude towards any other person, thought or comment.

The use of irony with the intention of praising someone's thoughts, ideas or possessions will be analysed more carefully with respect to Politeness Theory in the next chapter (n°5). In this section, I shall proceed to analyse and discuss only some examples which I believe to be part of the evidence that will be in favour of Derived Hypothesis n°5 ("Not all ironic utterances convey a derogatory attitude"):

- 1- The following is a passage from a speech delivered by the

chairman of a testimonial dinner in honour of Mr. Frank Faulkner. It is included in King and Crerar's *Choice of Words* (1969) as an example of the use of verbal irony to convey praise. (F. Faulkner had never been late, never extended a lunch hour beyond its sixty minutes and never missed a day's work):

<<But, ladies and gentlemen, the one thing about Frank Faulkner everyone remembers with concern is his incorrigible wayward character. When Frank left for lunch, no one could be sure whether he'd return fifty one or fifty minutes later. His night-time excursions, we have sadly concluded, must have extended well into the early morning. Who cannot testify to having seen him in these halls even before the day's work had begun?. Had he in fact been home, you might ask? Under oath, his wife has testified before our board that he lived here.>>

(1969: 117)

2- Haverkate (1988) gives two characteristic examples in which the negative meaning which is literally specified implies a positive attitude of the speaker toward the state of affairs described:

a) "Oh, how small you have grown!"

b) "I don't like you at all!"

a) would sound quite normal if uttered by an adult addressing a child, and b) could be an ironic statement made in a conversation between two lovers.

This type of irony seems to occur with a low rate of frequency if we compare it to derogatory irony (quantitative results taken out of the corpus will be given in chapter 7); however, a low frequency of occurrence does not grant the researcher reasons to disregard it. Nevertheless, most of the

authors writing about irony seem to disregard this possibility in spite of the fact that it was seen and considered by Cicero as early as one century before Christ (see 2.2). There are only a few modern researchers who take "praising irony" into account, like Haverkate (1988) or Holdcroft (1983) who, in his article *Irony as Trope, and Irony as Discourse*, acknowledges that "irony can be playful and affectionate, as well as wounding" (1983: 496). Jerzy Pelc, in *Studies in Functional Logical Semiotics of Natural Language* (1971), writes about this type of irony, but he calls it "anti-irony", defining it as "an approval which has the appearance of a criticism" (1971: 169). But the fact of calling it "anti-irony" lets the reader infer that he does not consider it a kind of irony but, rather, something opposite to it. The approach taken in this work disagrees with Pelc and takes "praising irony" as a type of irony, since I believe it to display basically the same phenomenon.

It was stated above that ,much to my surprise, in my investigation of ironic language, I have come across some instances of verbal irony in which the intention is neither to criticize nor to praise. One such example has already been quoted in 2.4. I refer to Pascal's letter, in which he apologises for writing it "longer than usual because he didn't have the time to make it shorter". It seems to be clear that here Pascal is neither criticising nor praising anybody. Nor is he showing any special attitude to anybody or making any kind of evaluation. This example, then, makes us reflect upon the validity of the generally accepted belief (among irony

specialists) that evaluation is implicit in the nature of an ironical utterance. My reflection is that, perhaps, the very essence of irony is to be found in contradiction and paradox, more than in echoic mention, criticism, praise or any kind of evaluation. All these elements can also form part or be components of verbal irony, but they are not essential, nor are they necessary or sufficient conditions for its happy realisation. Another example of this "neutral" kind of irony can be found in a quotation of W.H. Auden that Booth makes in *A Rhetoric of Irony*:

<<We are all here on earth to help each other, but what the others are here for, God only knows.>> (1974: 1)

Again, it cannot be said that there is any kind of evaluative criticism or praise in Auden's remark. The irony lies in the paradoxical nature of the utterance, which brings out the supplementary humour of it.

Thus, it seems to be the case that the only characteristic that is stable and present in all cases of irony analysed so far is contradiction and paradox, which is not, of course, the same as to speak of "opposite propositions". This contradiction may be present at different levels, as has been partially shown in 3.6.. I would dare to add that the kind of contradiction involved in verbal irony always has a witty character, i.e., it implies a witty speaker/writer. Wit is considered to be one of the highest forms of humour, and that is why verbal irony is so much related to humour (as will be shown in 4.7). Being witty entails playing with ideas. I will adopt William Hazlitt's

(quoted in Morreall (1983)) definition of wit so as not to be vague in my attempt to characterise irony. Hazlitt's definition is the following: "An arbitrary juxtaposition of dissonant ideas, for some lively purpose of assimilation or contrast, generally of both". As Morreall points out, "the witty comment will often consist of an amusing comparison of two things that normally would not be thought of as similar" (1983: 72). Thus, I believe that the connection between irony and wit is self-evident.

From the above considerations, and from the standpoint of the ironic speaker's intentions it may be stated that there are three main kinds of verbal irony, namely,

- 1- "Derogatory" irony
- 2- "Praising" irony
- 3- "Neutral" irony

The name of the first two kinds will be changed later (chapter 5) to "Negative" and "Positive" irony, and will be explained in due course in connection with Politeness Theory (chapter 5) and with the view taken in this study for the definition of verbal irony and the taxonomy proposed (chapter 8).

Having discussed Sperber & Wilson's view of verbal irony, and having thus found evidence to support hypotheses 4 and 5, we now turn our attention to another of the theories named at the beginning of this chapter.

4.4 Pretence Theory of Irony

Herbert Clark and Richard Gerrig (1984) proposed a Pretence

Theory of irony based on suggestions by Grice and Fowler. They claim that Sperber & Wilson have not correctly interpreted Grice in what he wanted to say about irony. They subsequently argue that Grice's theory assumes that the ironist is *pretending* to use one proposition in order to get across its contradictory one, rather than *using* that proposition. Thus Clark and Gerrig expand Grice's remarks on irony into a Pretence Theory of irony and argue for its superiority to the Mention Theory, describing its advantages for a psychological account of the functions and processes of irony.

Pretence Theory appeals to the etymology of the word irony, which, as was noted in chapter 2, comes from Greek *eironeia*, meaning "dissembling, ignorance purposely affected". According to Clark and Gerrig, Grice echoed the Hellenic account in the following remark: "To be ironical is, among other things, to pretend (as the etymology suggests) and while one wants the pretence to be recognised as such, to announce it as a pretence would spoil the effect" (1978:125).

Clark and Gerrig complete Grice's treatment of irony as a kind of pretence with Fowler's explanation of what the ironist is pretending to do:

<<Irony is a form of utterance that postulates a double audience, consisting of one party that hearing shall hear and shall not understand, and another party that, when more is meant than meets the ear, is aware both of that more and the outsiders' incomprehension. It may be defined as the use of words intended to convey one meaning to the uninitiated part of the audience and another to the initiated, the delight of it lying in the secret intimacy set up between the latter and the speaker.>>

(1965: 305-6)

The Pretence Theory is therefore expressed by its authors as follows:

<<Suppose S is speaking to A, the primary addressee, and to A', who may be present or absent, real or imaginary. In speaking ironically, S is pretending to be S' speaking to A. What S' is saying is, in one way or another, patently uniformed or injudicious, worthy of a "hostile or derogatory judgement or a feeling such as indignation or contempt" (Grice, 1978: 124). A' in ignorance, is intended to miss this pretence, to take S as speaking sincerely. But A, as part of the "inner circle" (to use Fowler's phrase), is intended to see everything -the pretence, S's injudiciousness, A's ignorance, and hence S's attitude toward S', A', and what S' said. S' and A' may be recognizable individuals (like the TV weather forecaster) or people of recognizable types (like opportunistic politicians).>>

(1984: 122)

In Clark and Gerrig's view, the Pretence Theory provides transparent explanations for important features of irony previously mentioned by Sperber and Wilson, such as a) asymmetry of affect, b) victims of irony, and c) ironic tone of voice. As regards a), Clark and Gerrig point out that people tend to see the world according to norms of success and excellence, and people in ignorance should cling especially tightly to these norms. This is just the sort of person ironists pretend to be, because they are more likely to make positive pretences, such as "What a clever idea", than negative ones, such as "What a stupid idea" (1984: 122). In relation to b), Clark and Gerrig agree with Sperber and Wilson in that irony always has victims, which according to Pretence Theory should be of two kinds: S' (the unseeing or injudicious person the ironist is pretending to be) and A' (the uncomprehending audience not in the inner circle). These two types are not distinguished by the Mention Theory.

Finally, Clark and Gerrig claim that Pretence Theory can naturally account for the ironic tone of voice, since the ironist is like an actor pretending to be another person and, consequently, has to imitate the voice of his/her victim (S').

As with the other theories studied hitherto, I find some of the claims of Pretence Theory can be argued. That is why I shall now proceed to analyse them.

4.4.1 Is irony always pretence?

After the above considerations about Pretence Theory, which purport to present a better solution to the problem than Mention Theory, I must say that at first sight there does not seem to be much difference between one theory and the other. There is not much difference between "echoing" someone's utterance and "pretending" to be that person by saying what s/he has said. All the examples presented in 4.3.1.1.1. as echoic could also be considered as cases of pretence: for instance, when, in example 2, Hacker says "my lips are sealed", we may consider that he is pretending to be Humphrey (who had previously uttered the same sentence) in order to mock him and take revenge. Or, in example 4, when one of the friends refers to Damian as "dear Damian", it could be considered that he is imitating or pretending to be any of the persons who love or like Damian. In the following conversational exchange between Rose, Dorothy and Sophia, we find an instance of irony which could also be labelled both as "pretence" and as "echoic":

Rose: I can't believe my mother is riding around on a smelly old bus, being harrassed, pushed around, possibly even mugged by hostile teenagers with bad haircuts.

Dorothy: Rose, listen to me. You're overreacting. Your mother is not a helpless child. She's an active, vital woman who can take care of herself.
PHONE RINGS

Rose: I'll get that. (Rose answers)
Hello. Yes. this is she. Oh, my Lord!

Dorothy: Rose, what is it?

Rose: (into phone) Yes, I understand. I'll be right there.
(Rose hangs up and grabs her keys)

Dorothy: Rose, what's wrong?

Rose: That was the police.

Dorothy: Is it your mother? Is she alright?

Rose: She's fine. She's at the police station. They picked up my vital, active mother. She was lost and disoriented. What do you have to say to that?.

(GG, 1991: 70-1)

When Rose refers to her mother as "vital and active", it can be said that she is "pretending" to be Dorothy in order to be ironic (showing how ridiculous Dorothy's previous comment was) and to show the irony of the situation, given the fact that her mother has been picked up by the police after finding her lost and disoriented. Again, it can be stated that Rose is, at the same time, "echoing" Dorothy's previous remark.

In spite of the fact that both echoing a person's utterance or idea and pretending to be that person seem to co-occur very often, examples have been found in the corpora of cases when they do not co-occur, i.e. sometimes the ironic speaker may be "echoing" but not pretending and some other times

s/he may be pretending but not "echoing", and in both instances s/he is using verbal irony, a fact that tells us something more about the phenomenon in question, namely that both echoing and pretending may be strategies used to convey ironic meanings, but that none of them is sufficient or complete in itself to describe all occurrences of the phenomenon. To illustrate, I shall present first, an example where the echoic utterance is echoic but where the writer does not seem to be pretending, and second, an example of the opposite situation, i.e., pretence but not echoic verbal irony

a)

<<Owing to their miraculous powers, priests (in the eleventh century) could determine whether a man should spend eternity in heaven or in hell. If he died while excommunicate, he went to hell; if he died after priests had performed all the proper ceremonies, he would ultimately go to heaven provided he had duly repented and confessed. Before going to heaven, however, he would have to spend some time -perhaps a very long time -suffering the pains of purgatory. Priests could shorten this time by saying masses for his soul, which they were willing to do for a suitable money payment.>>

(BR, 1958: 49)

Russell is here using echoic irony because he uses the priests' own words ("miraculous", for instance) to express his contempt for their ideas. By echoing their thoughts and the facts in the way his victims saw them, he is attacking them by trying to show his readers how absurd and unfair their views are to him. But in spite of ridiculing his victims by echoing their words and beliefs, he does not pretend to be any of his attacked victims. He does not need to do so, for the way in which he presents the

facts is enough to give an ironic effect: the reader readily understands that Russell does not think that priests in the 11th. century had miraculous powers. He only tells his readers about their beliefs and in doing so he introduces the opposition *spiritual/material* (one of the group of underlying oppositions found in this study as basic for the expression of verbal irony -see 7.3.1-) at the end, in such a way as to give the aggressive/negatively ironic effect of showing these priests' dishonesty.

b) An example of verbal irony in which the speaker decided to use pretence but did not need to echo anybody's utterance or idea is the following:

Rose: What's wrong with your heart?

Blanche: Oh, nothing. Dr Stein just thought it sounded a little -irregular. I think it's 'cause I was so uncomfortable sitting there topless with a strange man.

Dorothy: Next time, just pretend you're at home and he's the bug guy.

(GG, 1991: 175)

Dorothy is here being verbally ironic by using the strategy of "simulated advice" (see chapter 7). She is pretending to give her some advice but in fact she is criticising her once more for being so "easy" with men. This is also an example of speech act-oriented verbal irony (see 7.2.3), for the act intended is different from the act expressed. Although Dorothy is pretending, it cannot be said that she is echoing anybody's thoughts or ideas, for she is using a witty and pungent comment that cannot be traced backwards or forwards in the conversation

in any of the girls' utterances or ideas. It only seems to be what came up to her smart mind in that moment, with the intention to be aggressive towards Blanche, but with no intention of echoing hers or any other character's words.

Returning to Pretence Theory alone, I must say that, as with the other theories discussed in this work, I tried to test it by checking if it could be held for all the examples of verbal irony analysed in the corpora, and the outcome of this testing was similar to that of the other theories: not all the samples of ironic discourse seem to display acting or pretence on the part of the speaker (Research Hypothesis n° 6). Consider the examples analysed in 1 (3.6), in which the speaker means what she literally says but at the same time is ironical because she implies that her husband is not understanding and is consequently criticising him:

"I wish I had an understanding husband."

The point I want to make here is that the ironic speaker is not pretending to be anybody, nor is she echoing anybody's thought. She is just herself, being bitter at her husband and expressing a contradiction between what her husband is and what she would like him to be, conditions that, within the framework of the definition proposed later on in this work (see 7.3.1) seem to be necessary to make it ironic (the underlying semantic opposition here is *real vs. desired situation* -see 7.3.1).

Another example that seems to be in favour of Derived Hypothesis n° 6 could be Pascal's (quoted twice in this work; 2.4

and 3.1), when saying that he is making his letter long "only because he didn't have the time to make it shorter". There seems to be no pretence here. He is making an ironic (expressing a contradiction or paradox) and witty comment, without involving any other participant (implicit or explicit) in it. As there is no other participant implied, Pascal can not be pretending to be anybody. But even in the cases in which there are other participants and in which the speaker/writer's intention is to criticise, he may criticise without "pretending" as the following example from the corpus seems to suggest:

Humphrey: You came up with all the questions I hoped nobody would ask

Hacker: Well, Opposition is about asking awkward questions

Humphrey: And Government is about not answering them

Hacker: Well, you answered all mine, anyway.

Humphrey: I'm glad you thought so, Minister.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Humphrey's last statement is ironic. There is a "double meaning" in the verb "thought", which may lead to a twofold interpretation: 1) "I'm glad you thought so, because I really answered your questions"; or 2) "I'm glad you thought so, but you only "thought" so, because, in fact, I did not give you any reliable answer", i.e. "I cheated you". In saying so, Humphrey is not pretending to be Hacker; he is internally satisfied for having been able to cheat the Minister and stresses the word "thought" to show this fact to the audience. The tone used in

this utterance is tone III (divided), which, as will be discussed in chapter 6, seems to be frequently used in ironic utterances. The rising part of the tone on the word "Minister" suggests some "reservation" or "insinuation" on the part of Humphrey.

Nor can it be said here that Humphrey is echoing Hacker or any other person; the ironic interpretation in this example is basically conveyed by an implicit contrast between the verb "to think" and "to do", i.e.: it is as if Humphrey were thinking "This is what you thought, but it was not what I did".

I shall now turn to another of the arguments in Pretence theory that -from my point of view- can be refuted.

4.4.2 Victims of irony

The second observation I would like to make upon this theory is that the two kinds of victims (S' and A') are not always present in all cases of irony. This is certainly true when verbal irony is used in a play or when in a given language exchange there is a third participant, but this is not always the case. Sometimes the two audiences are simply not expected, and the ironic remark is directly addressed to the hearer without intending to convey a second (or better, "third") meaning for another participant or audience. The only necessary thing in these cases to get the ironic effect accross is that both speaker and hearer have a certain common ground of shared knowledge, and, in this way, the hearer will not be an "innocent" participant that "misses the pretence", and there will be no need for any

other kind of audience. Even more, it can be said that in some very specific cases, such as in Pascal's example, there is an audience, but there are no victims whatsoever. An example involving only one type of audience could be the following, in which a mother asks her daughter to bring her the paper and the daughter delays, so the mother says:

"Why don't you take your time and bring me the paper?"

We have seen examples similar to this one in 3.4, in which there is a contradiction in the speech act used and the one intended. The utterance seems to be a polite question, but it is, in fact, a command, equivalent to "Hurry up and bring me the paper". The mother is being ironic directly towards her daughter, and there is no other audience than the daughter, who will surely not be "innocent" about the mother's intended meaning.

4.4.3 Ironical tone of voice

This is an interesting point to discuss about verbal irony. Some authors (not only Clark and Gerrig) have studied ironic intonation to try to find out whether a particular intonation is characteristic of irony and whether it is a necessary condition of it.

As it was observed that in the corpora studied the speakers made use of this "ironical tone of voice", I decided it would be worth devoting a chapter to the study of the phenomenon. For that reason, this issue will not be discussed here, and I invite the reader to refer to chapter 6, in which I present the results

of a survey carried out in order to study the relationship between irony and prosodic features.

4.4.4 Final comments on the Pretence Theory of irony

Even though Pretence Theory seems to make sense in many respects, it can be concluded that, again, it does not paint the whole picture of irony. As was noted above, we can find examples in which the ironist is not pretending or acting in any way. In fact, one might argue that ironists are never acting, for they choose their conversation strategies in order to cause a particular effect on behalf of themselves and not of any other person or "victim".

The Pretence Theory of irony was counterattacked by Dan Sperber (1984), who argued that Clark and Gerrig had misinterpreted Mention Theory, and who tried to prove that "Pretence Theory might provide a plausible description of parody but that it fails to account for many types and many properties of irony proper" (1984: 130).

Finally, it should be remembered that Quintilian, as early as the first century A.D., had already considered pretence theories of irony, upon which he made the following reflection:

<<I have found some who speak of irony as *dissimulation*, but... this latter name does not cover the whole range of this figure.>>

(1st.c. A.D., ed. 1942: 99)

4.5 Irony and Sarcasm

When analysing the phenomenon of irony, there comes a point in which we ask ourselves whether irony is the same as sarcasm or, if they differ, in what respect they differ from each other. Interestingly, the scholars who have studied the question do not seem to be able to reach an agreement.

Raymond Gibbs, in *On the Psycholinguistics of Sarcasm* (1986), states that irony and sarcasm are different things, though he acknowledges that both are very difficult to define. He illustrates the difference by saying that if a speaker says "you're a fine friend" to someone who has injured him in some way, the utterance is sarcastic. However, if a speaker says "They tell me you're a slow runner" to someone who has just won a marathon or race, the utterance is seen as ironic (1986:3). In spite of this differentiation he makes, he then seems to use both concepts indistinctly all through the article, which is not strange, since I believe it is very difficult to separate one concept from the other. In my view, what Gibbs refers to as "sarcasm" is what I shall later on (chapter 6) call "negative irony" (derogatory), and what he calls irony proper is what I shall call "positive irony" (praising). Sarcasm, then, seems to be better placed as a kind of irony, for it can be said that all examples of sarcasm are ironical, but not all instances of irony are sarcastic.

Geoffrey Numberg (1981) makes an even more curious distinction, for he says that what distinguishes irony from

sarcasm is that irony is ultimately directed at the speaker himself, whereas sarcasm is not. The view taken in this study cannot be in agreement with Numberg's, because the evidence of the pieces of ironic discourse found in the corpora studied herein tells us that a speaker can be sarcastic towards himself as well as towards others. Or is it not true that many times in life (when we make a mistake) we find ourselves saying "How clever of me" (in a critical way, meaning "how could I have been such a fool!")?.

Roger Kreuz and Sam Glucksberg consider sarcasm as "a form of verbal irony" (1989: 374) and quote *The Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* definition of sarcasm:

<<A sharp and often satirical or ironic utterance designed to cut or give pain.>> (1988: 1043)

Muecke described sarcasm as "the crudest form of irony" (1980: 54). Holdcroft (1983: 495) and Leech (1980: 95) also assume that sarcasm is a type or a form of irony.

As with everything that has to do with irony, the different authors studying the phenomenon do not seem to be able to come to an agreement. Nash (1985) states that irony and sarcasm are different in that the sarcastic statement is ostensibly sincere, whereas the ironic one is not. So if somebody said "Tommy is lazy" it could be interpreted differently if the speaker's intention were sarcastic than if it were ironic: "Sarcastically, it might be said that Tommy doesn't strain himself; ironically, that Tommy is renowned for his labours" (1985: 152). In spite of this, Nash later on admits that there may be some doubt about

the assumption that the irony/sarcasm distinction is necessary and wholly valid, since both sarcasm and irony are counter-coded, and here is precisely where puzzling affinities can be seen between them.

Considering, then, that both sarcasm and irony cannot be seen as phenomena completely distinct from each other, I have thought it appropriate -on the basis of the analysis made in my research- to view sarcastic utterances as members of a subset of the universal set of ironic utterances, verbal irony being a much wider phenomenon than sarcasm. In this way, we would be able to say that all sarcastic utterances are ironic, but not all ironic utterances are sarcastic. Thus, being sarcastic (i.e. "negatively ironic" as will be better explained in chapter 5) will represent only one more of the possible strategies the ironic speaker/writer has at his/her disposal.

Therefore, the study of irony done in this work finds it more sensible to agree with Holdcroft (1983), Leech (1980), Muecke (1980) and Kreuz & Glucksberg (1989) in their consideration of sarcasm as a kind of irony, but there is a point in Kreuz and Glucksberg's article with which I can not agree, for it appears to be in contradiction with their own definition of sarcasm. They state that "people can use verbal irony without being sarcastic", an example of which would be to say: "Another gorgeous day" when it has been raining for 15 days (1989: 374), which sounds reasonable; but they also say that "people can be sarcastic without being ironic", and here is where I believe they contradict themselves. If sarcasm is a kind of irony, it can

never be set apart from it. The example they give is not convincing either, for they state a person can be sarcastic without being ironic when saying "Thanks a lot" to a person who has obviously been unhelpful to him, and this, we know, is one of the clear examples of irony given by Haverkate in his typology of irony based on Searle's typology of Speech Acts (as was shown in 3.6.1).

Katherina Barbe's concluding remark on the distinction between irony and sarcasm is in agreement with the position adopted in this study:

<<I conclude that sarcasm has a place under the heading irony... What makes it sarcasm however, is that the interpretation of the ironic utterance has to be ironic-sarcastic, it is thus somewhat stable. Speakers cannot later say I did not mean it in an attempt to save face because sarcasm leaves no room for guessing or doubting, for the so-called benefit of the doubt, which may be found in other non sarcastic instances of irony. Sarcasm still accords the hearers to save face. If they do not agree with the speaker, they do not need to reply and they can ignore the utterance. Direct criticism, on the other hand, would force a reply. In this case we can consider sarcasm a potentially face-threatening and attacking criticism which forces an ironic interpretation.>> (1995: 29)

If sarcasm is a type of irony, we infer that, in semantic terms, there is a hyponymic relationship between the two concepts, in which irony is the superordinate and sarcasm is a hyponym of it, in which case all instances of sarcasm are ironic.

We shall now enlarge our discussion of the aforementioned paper by Kreuz and Glucksberg, for the time has come to discuss the last of the psycholinguistic theories of irony proposed for analysis at the beginning of this chapter, namely, the Echoic Reminder Theory.

4.6 The Echoic Reminder Theory

R. Kreuz and S. Glucksberg (1989) base their theory on the following premises:

- "An ironic or sarcastic remark is a comment that is used to communicate the speaker's attitude toward an event or state of affairs such as disappointment with the weather itself or ridicule of a weather forecast that had gone sadly awry" (1989: 375);
- the ironic expression can remind a listener of what might have been expected and hoped for or of that inaccurate prediction;
- Sperber & Wilson were right in their appreciation of irony as an echoic interpretation, but Kreuz and Glucksberg propose to call this account *Echoic Reminder Theory* because: a) this term highlights the reminder function of echoic utterances, and b) <<although all ironic utterances accomplish their communicative intent by reminding listeners of some antecedent event, not all such reminders are "echoic".>> (1989: 375);
- echoic interpretation is then a special case of reminders in general : allusions to prior occurrences or states of affairs.

As can be deduced from these premises, Echoic Reminder Theory is very close to Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Interpretation Theory. There is much common ground between the two theories, with the only difference that, according to Kreuz and Glucksberg, the Echoic Reminder Theory covers a wider number of ironic utterances, for echoic utterances are simply one special kind of

reminder. Then there could be cases of ironic utterances which are reminders but not echoic. In this respect, Kreuz and Glucksberg seem to be right, for I have found several instances of verbal irony in the corpus which are "reminders" of some idea, thought, person or situation but that could not be labelled as "echoic". Consider the following comment by Bertrand Russell:

[1]

<<If you wish to persuade people that because Adam ate an apple, all who have never heard of this interesting occurrence will be roasted in an everlasting fire by a benevolent Deity, you must catch them young, make them stupid by means of drink or drugs, and carefully isolate them from all contact with books or companions capable of making them think.>>

(BR, 1958: 58)

This passage is rich in terms of ironic interpretation: on the one hand, the adjectives "interesting" and "benevolent" are ironic in the traditional sense: they convey "the opposite"; Russell wants to say that Adam and the apple were not interesting occurrences at all, and that the Deity can not be benevolent if it will roast any person in an everlasting fire (which constitutes, in itself, an ironical situation). On the other hand, all the passage is ironic because it is reminiscent of some religious ideas which Russell is obviously criticising. Thus, this comment reminds us of these ideas but is not "echoing" them in the strict sense of the word. To echo would be to repeat the same ideas in some way or another, but Russell is not repeating what religious people say or think; he is being bitterly sarcastic by giving a "recipe" for persuading people of some religious belief, this recipe being "making them stupid by means

of drinks or drugs and making them incapable of thinking". He is trying to remind the readers of some errors that -according to his view- religion has committed, and of religious ideas that are ridiculous as far as he can judge. As noted above, thus, instances of "reminding", though not "echoic" irony, can be found.

In the same way as with Sperber and Wilson's Theory, the approach of this investigation views the Echoic Reminder Theory as showing one aspect or one of the possible strategies of irony, but not all of them. Echoic Reminder Theory insists on derogatory irony and states that "victimless irony is difficult, if not impossible to interpret" (1989: 377). We have already seen how irony can be sometimes clearly victimless (4.4.2), a view that is held by serious scholars who have devoted their lives to the study of irony, such as Enright or Muecke.

On the other hand, in the same way that it is not always necessary for an ironic utterance to be echoic, the evidence of many examples shows that, in some cases, it is not necessary either for it to remind the listener of anything "that might have been expected or hoped for". Consider the following exchange in a trial, in which the lawyer is being ironic as to the anxiety of the accused over his grandmother's signing of the will:

[2]

a	11	^was she in lbed on the 'twenty-'fourth of	/
a	11	J/anuay# - - -	/
b	11	[@:m] - - - ^n\o# - -	/
a	11	((cos)) ^when she was !\in b/ed#	/
a	11	she'd ^got [dhi:] . :tray or a lb\ook#	/

a	11	as a ^b\ack'ground#	/
a	11	^h\adn't she#	/
b	11	^y/es#	/
a	11	and ^you I im/agine#	/
a	11	were ^most 'anxious that she was lc\omfortable#	/
a	11	be^fore 'letting her :s\ign the 'document# - - -	/

(LLC, S.11.1)

The irony of the prosecutor does not seem to be reminding anyone of any expectation or hope. He is just attacking the accused by letting the hearers infer that this anxiety for the grandmother to be comfortable was not so much so for her comfort as for her signing the will. The ironic strategy here (as in many other instances) seems to be of a much more delicate sort than simply the "reminding of any thought, idea or comment". Surely this could be easily argued against by Echoic Reminder Theory supporters by saying that the prosecutor's ironic comment could be reminiscent of some other similar comment or idea expressed by any person at any given time, but then this theory would be too general, and again, as is the case with Echoic Mention and Interpretation Theories, any utterance could be labelled as ironic, and the fact of being a reminding utterance would not be a revealing fact for analytical purposes.

Before getting into the analysis of humour within irony, I would like to conclude that all the psycholinguistic theories we have been analysing present a true aspect or feature of irony. Nevertheless, they all seem to fail in embracing all possible cases. As was stated in chapters 2 and 3, if we look at the phenomenon with the concept of "strategy" in mind, we can well see that these particular aspects pointed out by the different

theories are but particular strategies that a speaker can use to be ironic; i.e., a speaker can echo a previous utterance and be ironic, s/he can choose to "pretend" s/he is being another person to express irony, or s/he can appeal to the hearer's remembering some kind of thought or comment to understand the irony of his/her (the speaker's) utterance. S/he may as well do all these things at the same time or none of them and be ironic all the same. For we also conclude that the very essence of irony seems to lie in *implied contradiction*, which can be present at any level and which is expressed through a varied number of strategies.

Finally, and as a summary and illustration, I present a chart with the main theories of verbal irony (and their arguments) discussed hitherto (chart 4.1).

CHART 4.1: THEORIES OF VERBAL IRONY DISCUSSED HITHERTO

THEORY	AUTHOR(S)	ARGUMENTS/MAIN IDEAS
1-CLASSICAL/TRADITIONAL	Socrates, Cicero, Quintilian, Samuel Johnson (and many modern authors)	* irony as "trope" or "figure" of speech * the utterance means the opposite of its literal meaning (opposite of the proposition)
2- THEORY OF IMPLICATURE	Paul Grice	* the ironic speaker violates one of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle, i.e., the Quality Maxim, and, thus, he is being insincere. * the listener understands the irony through implicature after rejecting the literal meaning
3- THEORY OF SPEECH ACTS	Austin, Searle, Haverkate, etc.	* indirect speech acts can sometimes convey irony * irony can result from an opposition of speech acts
4- ECHOIC MENTION THEORY	Sperber & Wilson	* all cases of irony are instances of echoic <u>mention</u> of some previous utterance
5- ECHOIC INTERPRETATION/ RELEVANCE THEORY	Sperber & Wilson	* all cases of irony are instances of echoic <u>interpretation</u> of some previous thought, idea or utterance
6- PRETENCE THEORY	Clark & Gerrig	* the ironist is <u>pretending</u> to use one proposition in order to get across its contradictory one
7- ECHOIC REMINDER THEORY	Kreuz & Glucksberg	* ironic expressions <u>remind</u> the listener of some previous thought, comment, expectation or hope

I now turn to another of the psychological aspects of irony, namely, the fact that irony can be humorous and that then, humour can be one of the intended meanings of it , as well as an aim or purpose in itself.

4.7 Irony and Humour

Verbal irony is very much related to humour. The contradiction or clash expressed by it, and sometimes the witty kind of aggression or praise that it conveys, gives a comic or humorous effect to it. It generally elicits the external or "internal" laugh of some of the participants. In cases of sarcasm (aggressive irony), the victim of the criticism does not generally laugh, but if there is an audience or if the words said by the ironist are later on told to a third person, most surely these words will make the audience or third participant laugh.

In conversation, we many times tend to play. Language becomes a game and joking through sarcasm (and irony in general) is part of that game.

Neal Norrick (1994) analyses conversational joking and states that "it is associated with aggression but also with rapport, and with disrupting conversation but also with intensifying cohesion" (1994: 409). He includes sarcasm within conversational joking and points out that sarcasm can also enhance rapport by excluding others. Though sarcasm and mocking seem to signal negative effect, Norrick acknowledges that "even these aggressive forms of joking reframe the interaction as play

like the other joking strategies, so they end up conveying solidarity and modulating involvement, especially among conversationalists who maintain a customary joking relationship" (1994: 409). Indeed, if we analyse the relationship existing among people who are generally ironic and sarcastic towards one another, in many instances it will be found that they are close friends, husband and wife, or that they bear some other kind of close relationship. This will be analysed in more detail in chapter 5, in which irony will be studied in the scope of Politeness Theory.

According to some psychologists, there is a connection between humour and memory. Stephen Schmidt (1994) concluded (after a cognitive experiment in which memory for humorous and non-humorous versions of sentences was compared) that humorous sentences were better remembered than non-humorous ones. Maybe this is one of the subconscious reasons for using irony (which is generally humorous): we want to go deep in the hearer's or audience's mind so as to leave our "seal" on it.

The use of irony as a humorous device has then much to do with deep human psychological motifs. I believe that the understanding of these psychological motifs can lead us to a better comprehension of the whole phenomenon, and that is why it will be very useful to introduce Freud's theory of jokes, as he developed it in his well-known paper *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (first published in 1905. The edition that will be referred to here is the 1991 Penguin one). But before scrutinising Freud's reflections on jokes and humour, I will

present briefly some of the theories and ideas about "laughter" that different scholars have put forward. I consider this appropriate given the fact that laughter is a feature that very frequently accompanies irony, and this occurs to such an extent that I have had to consider it as one of the variables in my study of the prosodic features of irony (see chapter 6).

4.7.1. Theories of laughter

In his book entitled *Taking Laughter Seriously* (1983), John Morreal presents four theories of laughter: three traditional ones and his own. He notes that, unlike other pieces of physiological behaviour like yawning or coughing, laughter is connected with emotions, and that is why it is difficult to find a comprehensive theory that accounts for all cases of laughter (the same can be said of irony, as I have discussed).

The oldest of the theories -though probably the most widespread one- is "The Superiority Theory", which holds the hypothesis that laughter is an expression of a person's feelings of superiority over other people. Plato was one of the first supporters of this theory, for he thought that laughter involved a certain "malice" or "a pain in the soul". Laughter, then, according to this theory, is basically a form of derision and something that people use to look down on others. One of the steps in the evolution of modern laughter was the development of ridicule. Indeed, in cultures like that of Samoa for instance, cruel laughter and the laugh of ridicule seem to be the dominant

kinds of laughter.

The second theory discussed by Morreall is "The Incongruity Theory". For the supporters of this theory, amusement is an intellectual reaction to something that is unexpected, illogical or inappropriate. The basic idea behind this theory is that we live in an orderly world, where we have come to expect certain patterns among things, their properties, events, etc.; and so we laugh when we experience something that does not fit into these patterns. The most famous proponents of this theory were Kant and Shopenhauer (18th and 19th centuries).

In both the Superiority and Incongruity theories, there is a certain duality or contrast that triggers laughter.

The third of the theories of laughter, "The Relief Theory", has a physiological point of view in which laughter is seen as a venting of nervous energy. This theory was supported by Freud (among other authors), as we shall see in the next point of this chapter. Laughing, within this theory, would be analogous to the opening of a safety valve in a steam pipe: in the same way that the opening of the valve releases excess steam pressure built up within the pipe, laughter is supposed to release excess nervous energy built up within the laugher's nervous system (Morreall, 1983:26).

The fourth and last of these theories is the one supported by Morreall himself. He observes that each of the above theories embrace one aspect of laughter but not all the possible ones, and, so, he puts forward his theory by saying that "laughter results from a pleasant psychological shift"

(1883: 39). By giving this general definition he attempts to cover all cases of laughter, even the laughter caused by tickling.

Much could be said about each of the theories presented above, but for the purposes of this piece of research, it is enough to analyse them only a bit in order to find their connection to irony. If we look at the claims made by each theory, we shall see that all of them account for cases of laughter which could be elicited after an instance of verbal irony: the words "derision" and "ridicule" used to explain the first of the theories are self-evident for cases of sarcasm or "aggressive irony". The name of the second theory, "incongruity", also recalls the contradictory essence of irony. "The Relief Theory" will be analysed more profoundly in relation to Freud's view of humour and jokes, but for the time being, let me say only that, many times, verbal irony serves the speaker as an escape for his repressed feelings towards a given person or situation. Finally, as regards Morreall's "New Theory", I think that most instances of irony constitute a "pleasant psychological shift" and that is the reason why they make us laugh.

Therefore, the narrow relationship existing between irony and laughter can not be denied. We shall now look into a more complex and intricate psychological theory of humour, namely Freud's theory of jokes.

4.7.2 Sigmund Freud's interpretation of jokes

4.7.2.1 Causes and purposes of jokes

Sigmund Freud makes a thorough analysis of jokes, after which he concludes that "joking is an activity which aims at deriving pleasure from mental processes, whether intellectual or otherwise" (1905: 139). He writes about two main kinds of jokes, namely, *innocent* jokes and *tendentious* jokes. He asserts that *tendentious* jokes are those in which there is either hostile or sexual aggressiveness and that they generally call for three people: the one who makes the joke, the one taken as the object of the aggression, and a third in whom the joke's aim of producing pleasure is fulfilled (1905: 143). Freud points out that in these cases, it is not the person who makes the joke who laughs at it and who, therefore, enjoys its pleasurable effect, but the inactive listener.

Sarcastic jokes would then be included within *tendentious* jokes, and the purposes and causes of the latter would be the same as those of the former.

The psychological explanation that Freud gives for jokes is traced back to the "childhood" of human civilisation and to our individual childhood. He explains that ever since the childhood of civilisation, hostile impulses against our fellow men have been subject to the same restrictions and progressive repression as our sexual urges. And so it is that we have made some advances in the control of our hostile impulses. To illustrate

this fact, he quotes Lichtenberg, who put it in drastic terms:

<<Where we now say "Excuse me!", we used to give a box in the ears.>>

(1905: 146)

This brutal hostility, now forbidden by law, has been replaced by verbal *invective*, and so it is that by making (through jokes) our enemy very small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve the pleasure of overcoming him/her, and a third person can, therefore, bear witness by his/her laughter. In this part of his analysis of jokes, Freud does not speak in particular about irony, but it can be clearly inferred that this is applicable to a great part of ironic jokes, namely, sarcastic or aggressive ones. Freud explains the part played by jokes in hostile aggressiveness in the following way:

<<A joke will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly or consciously; once again, then, the joke will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible. It will further bribe the hearer with its yield of pleasure into taking sides with us without any very close investigation just as on other occasions we ourselves have often been bribed by an innocent joke into overestimating the substance of a statement expressed jokingly.>>

(1905: 147)

In agreement with this view, irony can be seen as one of the "refinements" of civilization, and maybe this is why many authors and people in general associate irony with cleverness or intelligence. If a person is clever and "civilised", s/he will try to express his/her aggressiveness in an elegant way, and not start "punching other people on their nose".

Freud also remarks that another of the purposes of

tendentious jokes may sometimes be to make aggressiveness or criticism possible against persons in exalted positions who claim to exercise authority. The joke represents a rebellion against that authority and a liberation from its pressure (1905: 149). After reading this, a recalling of the purposes of irony in many cases cannot be helped. If we remember the examples of irony taken from the series "Yes, Minister" that have been analysed, we shall conclude that most of them illustrate this purpose: the use of irony (which is humorous to the audience) makes it possible for Humphrey (the Minister's Secretary) to criticise the Minister, who is in a position of authority in relation to him. All this has to do with the sociological variable of power, which is considered by Brown and Levinson in their *Theory of Politeness* and which will be more closely analysed with respect to irony in the next chapter. But it is important for us to see Freud as an antecedent to these ideas, which were later on inspected from a sociolinguistic perspective.

4.7.2.2 Irony in Freud's view

In *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, Freud makes only two allusions to irony. The first one is in relation to "the techniques of jokes". One of the techniques of jokes is, according to Freud, "representation by the opposite", a technique which "is used frequently and works powerfully" (1905: 113). He also notes that this technique is by no means peculiar to jokes. It is also a characteristic of irony. Thus, Freud views irony

in a very restricted light, which reminds us of the classical and traditional approaches studied in chapter 2. His exact words are the following:

<<The only technique that characterizes irony is representation by opposite.>>

(1905: 113)

However, the entire book is full of ironic jokes which, for the most part, are not considered by him to be ironic, but that clearly show irony working through strategies other than "representation by opposite".

As has been argued, his explanation of the causes and purposes of jokes can very well fit in for many instances of verbal irony, and, as we shall hereafter see, there is still much more in his theory of jokes that can perfectly well be applied to and related to irony. Later on, in his second allusion to irony, Freud recognizes irony as a subspecies of the comic:

<<A person who tries to bring the joke-work into operation in himself as deliberately as possible -a professional wag- soon discovers as a rule that the easiest way of replying to an assertion by a joke is by asserting its contrary and by leaving it to the inspiration of the moment to get rid of the objection which his contradiction is likely to provoke, by giving what he has said a fresh interpretation. It may be that the representation by the opposite owes the favour it enjoys to the fact that it forms the core of another pleasurable way of expressing a thought, which can be understood without any need for bringing in the unconscious. I am thinking of irony, which comes very close to joking and is counted among the sub-species of the comic... It produces comic pleasure in the hearer, probably because it stirs him into a contradictory expenditure of energy which is at once recognized as being unnecessary.>>

(1991: 232).

4.7.2.3 Freud's theory of jokes and how it can be related to some psycholinguistic theories of irony previously analysed in this chapter

All through Freud's paper about jokes, we can find elements that remind us of the psycholinguistic theories of irony we have been analysing. When speaking about "the purposes of jokes", for instance, Freud states that "joke-techniques are partly governed by a tendency towards economy. Given that in the case of tendentious jokes much pleasure is obtained, it is therefore plausible to suppose that this yield of pleasure corresponds to the physical expenditure that is saved" (1905: 167). I believe a recalling of Relevance Theory is unavoidable here, particularly in its claim that an assumption is more relevant if it has the greatest contextual effects requiring the smallest processing effort (1986: 125). In the case of irony, the speaker is trying to be more relevant, and the ironic remark is the way he finds of producing the desired contextual effects by trying to economise in effort. This is also what happens with jokes, Freud explains, and I understand this also holds for ironic jokes.

Another of the elements that can be found in irony, and which -as we have seen- is defended by Pretence Theory, is *mimicry*. Freud makes an allusion to it when he explains that mimicry is one of the sources of comic pleasure, and that it "gives quite extraordinary pleasure to the hearer and makes its object comic even if it is still far from the exaggeration of a caricature" (1905: 261).

When analysing the genesis of jokes, Freud states that some

jokes give us pleasure because they make us rediscover something which is familiar to us; they make us remember. There is a close connection between recognising and remembering; so, according to Freud, there is also a pleasure in remembering (1905: 171). And this, needless to say, reminds us of the Echoic Reminder Theory seen in 4.6.

It seems, then, that many of the elements which are present in jokes are also present in irony: economy of effort, pretence, remembering. And I would like to add that in the same way that each of these elements does not define jokes in their totality, neither does each of them define irony on the whole. They can be present in many instances of ironic utterances but each element is not enough if we want to get into the essentials for a good definition of irony.

I would venture to say that all the examples of irony analysed in the course of this investigation are humorous in some way or another. In both *"Yes, Minister"* and *The Golden Girls* the irony is intended to make the audience laugh, given their characteristics as television comedy programmes. But even in Bertrand Russell's examples, which show a serious criticism of society, religion and other human matters, it cannot be denied that at least a very special kind of "inner" laugh is caused in the reader, who is supposed to be his "accomplice". Many instances of humorous irony have also been found in the corpus of journalistic writing used in this investigation.

To present just one more very humorous example, let us find the "pleasure" of the following sarcastic remark uttered by

Dorothy, as a criticism to Blanche's desire to be "for ever young":

[1]

Dorothy: Now what are you doing?

Blanche: Taking my bee pollen, my sheep liver extract, and my fish oil protein. I'm getting years younger with each passing day.

Dorothy: Fine, Blanche. When they defrost Walt Disney he'll have someone to go out with.

(GG, 1991: 67)

4.7.2.4 The techniques of jokes

Freud analyses a considerable number of jokes (many of which are clearly ironical) and finds different joke-techniques, which are summarised as follows:

I) Condensation

- a) with formation of composite word
- b) with modification

II) Multiple use of the same material

- c) as a whole and in parts
- d) in a different order
- e) with slight modification
- f) of the same words full and empty

III) Double meaning

- g) meaning as a name and as a thing
- h) metaphorical and literal meanings
- i) double meaning proper (play upon words)
- j) double entendre
- k) double meaning with allusion

(1905: 76-7)

I am not going to deal with each of the techniques here, but after all that has been said about irony, it is not difficult to see that many of these techniques are also techniques or

strategies used in ironic speech. "Double meaning" is the most transparent one. Within "double meaning", the use of puns or plays upon words is one of the techniques which I have found to be rather common among ironic strategies. An example could be the following, given by W. H. Ballin (1990) (quoting a theatre critic), in which there is a play upon two common meanings of, precisely, the word *play*:

<<The Finchley Dramatic Society played Shakespeare last night. Shakespeare lost.>>

(1990: 7)

By associating the meaning of "play" for competitive games with its meaning for "performing" or "acting", the theatre critic is being ironic and humorous because his intention is ultimately to say that the performance left much to be desired.

The analysis of ironic "double meaning" could also be viewed from and associated with the standpoint of Minsky's *Frame-theory* (1975), a computational and psychological approach to discourse understanding. Frame theory is basically an attempt to provide conventional or stereotypic representations of knowledge of the world as an explanation for the interpretation of discourse. Basic to Minsky's theory is the claim that our knowledge is stored in memory in the form of data structures which he calls "frames" and which represent stereotyped situations. Thus, when we encounter a new situation, we select from our memory a structure called "frame", which is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit the reality of the particular situation. The example of the theatre play given above could then be interpreted as a situation that calls for the retrieving of two mental

"frames": 1) the frame of "competitive games", where the verb "play" fills a particular "slot", and 2) the frame of "theatre performances", in which the verb "play" fills another kind of "slot" (different from that in 1).

Related to Minsky's *Frames* are Schank & Abelson's *Scripts* (1977), Sanford & Garrod's *Scenarios* (1981), Anderson's *Schemata* (1977) and Johnson-Laird *Mental Models* (1980). All of these are proposals for dealing with the organisation of knowledge in memory and show ways to store such knowledge.

As can be noted, Freud's early techniques of jokes can now be re-examined in the light of more modern psychological approaches and theories. I shall refer to more of these techniques in the future development of this work, for as has already been noted, the strategies or techniques used by the ironist are a central concern of this investigation. A typology of ironic strategies will be presented in chapter 8, within which the techniques anticipated by Freud will be reflected.

4.8 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have tried to approach the phenomenon of irony from a psychological and psycholinguistic perspective, which I understand to be very important given the great connection between language and mind and, especially, between irony and mental strategies. I have tried to discuss the main principles of the most well-known psycholinguistic theories of irony, and I have come to the conclusion that all of them show

a certain aspect of the phenomenon, but none of them can be said to describe it totally. However, it can be said that they have helped us understand that irony can be pretence, remembrance, or echo (or many more things), and that the causes of its use may be deep in our mind, in the human tendency to obtain pleasure from every activity; or, contradictorily (as irony itself), in our primitive instincts of aggression towards our enemies or opponents.

We have also been exposed to the humoristic side of irony through the presentation of the theories of laughter and mainly through Freud's careful analysis of jokes. There is a very close relationship between irony and humour, and irony and laughter. Being humorous and ironic at the same time can avoid physical hostility. We can prove to be more "elegant" and more "civilised" if we manifest our hostility by means of irony.

Since humour is considered to be one of the characteristics of healthy minds, we could then easily conclude that being ironic is also very healthy in most cases, and that is one of the causes that makes it worth investigating.

I have also tried to show evidence in favour of three of the initial hypotheses (5, 6 and 7) by means of some examples belonging to the corpora analysed. It has thus been concluded that not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention, nor do all of them convey a derogatory attitude, and also that not all ironic utterances can be said to be instances of "pretence".

As regards the speaker's attitude, it has been shown that

a speaker can sometimes use irony as an aggressive tool (and therefore be sarcastic), but he can also use it with the intention of praising the addressee; what is more surprising is that, in some special cases, he may be neutral and have no intention of conveying any critical attitude whatsoever.

Having tackled one of the most prominent issues in the production and reception of irony, namely psychological motivation and mechanisms, I now turn to analyse verbal irony from a sociolinguistic perspective. In particular, I shall look at it from the standpoint of Politeness Theory.

Chapter 5: *IRONY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF
POLITENESS THEORY*

<<The true ironist will be the man who can be ironical in ways not permitted by the rules, values, and norms of his speech community. the reason is obvious: the less likely the occurrence of irony the more impact it can have.>>

D.C. Muecke, *The Communication of Verbal Irony*

<<Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter's remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English. "I don't quite understand you", she said, as politely as she could.>>

L. Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

5.1 Introduction

It would not be fair to study verbal irony without taking into account the perspective that views the phenomenon as one of the strategies of politeness that speakers use to reach certain communicative aims. This view focuses more on the sociological aspect than on the psychological one.

The main aim of this chapter is, thus, to discuss the type of strategies and the sociological variables intervening in the phenomenon of irony in the light of the Theory of Politeness. In particular, I shall discuss some of the issues put forward by

Brown & Levinson in *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (1987, first published in 1978).

Whereas Leech (1983) places irony as one of the "principles of pragmatics" of interpersonal rhetoric (i.e. "a second-order principle which builds upon , or exploits, the principle of politeness" (1983: 82)), Brown & Levinson place irony as one possible politeness strategy; more precisely, as a substrategy of the major politeness strategy n° 4 (off record) for doing Face Threatening Acts (hereinafter FTAs). According to Brown & Levinson, "a communicative act is done off record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act" (1987: 211). Off record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language, and, in all cases, the hearer must make some inference to recover the intended meaning of the speaker. All off record strategies (in Brown & Levinson's view) violate one of the Gricean Maxims. "Be ironic" is placed as a strategy violating only the Quality Maxim (1987: 214). The observation of many ironic utterances in the corpus studied led me to have some doubts in this respect, and, therefore, I formulated the following research question:

Can an ironic speaker/writer violate the other Gricean maxims as well?

from which the following hypothesis was derived (Hypothesis n° 7 in the Introduction):

An ironic speaker/writer can not only violate the Quality Maxim but also the other three Gricean Maxims.

I shall try to present evidence to confirm this hypothesis, for I believe that Brown & Levinson's conception is based on a

traditional view of irony; i.e., they have restricted irony to conditions of truth and falsity, to "opposite propositions", and, as I have tried to explain in chapter 2, the problem does not appear to be so simple.

Another of the research questions of my investigation of irony in the field of politeness phenomena was the following:

Does irony fit perfectly within off record strategies, or is it that many times the ironic speaker can make use of on record strategies to make his/her point?

This question originated from the observation that, in the corpora studied here, some ironical utterances were found in which it was clear that the speaker was also using Positive and/or Negative Politeness and both these strategies are presented by Brown & Levinson as on record².

From the above research question the following hypothesis was derived (Research Hypothesis n° 8 in the Introductory chapter of this dissertation)

An ironic speaker/writer can make use not only of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make his point. The frequency of occurrence of the former strategies is higher than that of the latter, but this does not deny the existence of the latter.

This would imply that a speaker can go off record with Negative and/or Positive Politeness (as will be shown in 5.3), something which is not in agreement with Brown & Levinson's scheme of strategies, which I reproduce in Figure 5.a:

²"An actor goes on record in doing an act A if it is clear to participants what communicative intention led the actor to do A, (i.e., there is just one unambiguously attributable intention with which witnesses would concur)" (1987: 68-9).

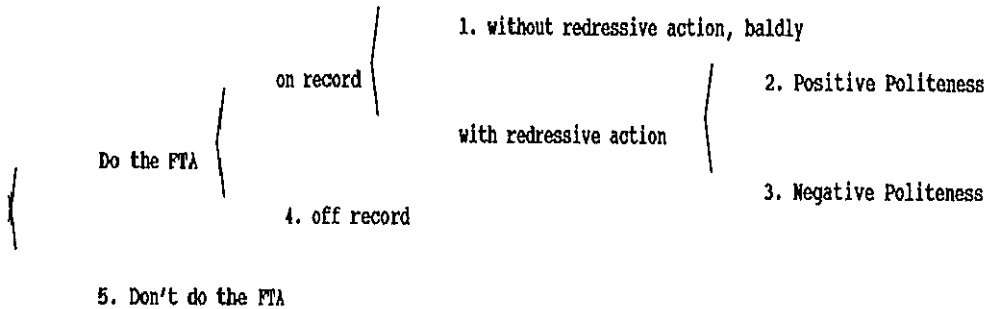


Fig. 5.a: Possible Strategies for doing FTA's (1987: 69)

I shall try to show that there are various possible combinations of both on record and off record strategies, and that, even within the different substrategies labelled by Brown & Levinson as off record, irony is not just one single, isolated substrategy: it can combine with the other off record strategies as well. From this last observation, the next hypothesis was formulated (Research Hypothesis n° 9 in the Introduction):

A speaker/writer can make different off record strategies co-occur in order to convey an ironic meaning.

This would again imply that irony is not so simple a phenomenon as to be placed as a number on a list of substrategies which are distinct and separate from one another. Politeness theory serves my purpose in this respect, for it will allow us to observe the versatility of the phenomenon by means of the appreciation of the richness of the possibilities of combination of strategies. The sheer variety of the phenomenon is indeed a temptation to the thesis maker.

A final analysis is made in this chapter on the

influence of the sociological variables P (power), D (distance) and R (ranking of imposition of the particular culture) upon the use of verbal irony. The initial research question was the following:

Do the sociological variables P, D and R have any influence upon the use of verbal irony? If so, in what ways do they affect it?

And the resulting hypothesis was Research Hypothesis n° 10:

The sociological variables P, D, and R influence the use of verbal irony

The ways in which these variables affect the choice of strategies within the use of verbal irony will be discussed in some of the examples in the corpus, although I am conscious of the fact that these variables may interact in rather intricate and complicated ways, and consequently further and deeper research than the one done in this piece of work would be desirable in the future to be able to make valid generalisations.

I shall now proceed to the discussion of the issues raised in this introduction by trying to give evidence for the confirmation of Research Hypothesis n° 7, in connection with irony and the violation of the Gricean Maxims.

5.2 Verbal irony and the maxims of Grice's Cooperative principle

From Brown & Levinson's definition of off record strategies, it can be deduced that this type of strategy is the ideal one to use when the speaker/writer wants to avoid responsibility (to a certain extent) for doing his FTA. By going

off record, the speaker can leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret the FTA. The clue to the correct interpretation of off record FTAs lies in the making of some inferences which will allow the addressee to understand what was, in fact, intended by the speaker. The off record speaker or writer, thus, invites conversational implicatures by flouting the Gricean Maxims of Communication in some way. Brown & Levinson arrange their list of off record strategies according to the maxim that they believe each strategy violates [see their chart, (1987: 214)]. As was anticipated in the introduction to this chapter, "Be ironic" is included within the strategies that violate the Quality Maxim, and one of the aims of this part of my work is to try to show that it can violate the other three Gricean Maxims as well. Leech (1983) implicitly holds this hypothesis when, after presenting example [1], he states that it can easily tip over into an ironic interpretation:

- [1] A: We'll all miss Bill and Agatha, won't we?
B: Well. we'll all miss BILL³

(1983: 80)

We could not say that B is here flouting the Quality Maxim, for he is telling the truth. This example is presented by Leech as breaking the Quantity Maxim, as can be clearly observed, for when A asks B to confirm A's opinion, B merely confirms part of it and pointedly ignores the rest. Leech relates this fact to the exploitation not only of the Irony Principle but also of the Principle of Politeness, for B could have been more informative

³ Leech notes that the reply in [1] would almost certainly have a fall-rise tone, which is an intonation often associated with indirect implicature. This is a point that I shall discuss in detail in Chapter 6.

but only at the cost of being more impolite to a third party (1983: 81). Thus, from Leech's reasoning, it can be concluded that people are ironic in order to avoid being impolite⁴.

I shall now present and discuss certain examples found in the corpus that give evidence of the violation of the four Gricean Maxims by ironic speakers/writers.

5.2.1 Maxim of Quality⁵

As I have discussed in a previous paper (Alba Juez, 1995a), the fact that Brown & Levinson consider irony as a strategy that violates only the Maxim of Quality is consistent with their view of irony as meaning "the opposite" of what is said literally, since, in this way, it is clearly seen that one is not "making a true contribution". This would include prototypical examples of verbal irony such as "John's a fine friend" or "John's a genius", meaning "John's not a good friend" and "John's stupid" respectively, where the literal meaning is not true. Examples from the corpus that violate this maxim have already been presented in 2.4.1 of this dissertation under the heading "Prototypical cases". But, as has been repeatedly noted in this thesis, verbal irony goes beyond "not telling the truth", and, since it underlies diverse intellectual mechanisms, it many times violates the other maxims of the Cooperative Principle. Green remarks that there is a greater moral load attached to the

⁴ This is a point that I believe could be refuted for some cases of irony, as I shall try to show in this chapter. Note also that it appears to be the case that when Leech uses the term "politeness" he does not mean the same as Brown and Levinson. Leech seems here to stick more to the "social norm view" (in B. Fraser's terms, (1990: 220)).

⁵ The Maxims, as Grice stated them, have been quoted in 3.2.

Maxim of Quality than to the others: "violating it amounts to a moral offense, whereas violating the others is at worst inconsiderate or rude" (1989: 89). I do not believe that this is valid for cases of irony, since, as was discussed in 2.2, although, in many cases, the speaker is performing an "act of misrepresentation" (Fraser, 1994), the intention of the ironist is not to mislead the hearer, an intention that is distinguished from that of the liar, who does intend to mislead the hearer. Consequently, I do not think that a speaker whose intention is to be ironic can be thought of by his hearer to be a moral offender for violating the maxim of quality. In many cases, the ironic speaker is certainly rude and may offend the hearer, but not precisely because of the violation of the maxim in itself but because of the implication of his/her utterance, which is a different thing. The ironic speaker is not lying; on the contrary, s/he wants his hearer to know that he does not mean what s/he says.

Interestingly, for some cases of irony, I have observed that the Maxim of Quality is not violated in the least. As was anticipated in Chapter 2, the ironic speaker sometimes means precisely what s/he says. Martin (1992) presents the following two examples of verbal irony, which, nevertheless, describe an actual state of affairs:

- 1) "Our friends are always there when they need us."
- 2) (A French television thriller called "Torture" was reviewed in the following terms):
"I have to say that what tortured me most in watching this film was boredom."

(1992: 81-2)

In both examples, the speakers are telling the truth. In the first example, the irony lies in the implicit opposition of they to we (which would be the expected pronoun in that utterance) and of us to them (this represents, at a deeper level, the opposition self/others -see 8.2). It has, for this reason, a comic-ironic effect, but it cannot be said that the speaker is flouting the Maxim of Quality. The second example is not lacking in irony either, although the critic is telling the truth. He takes advantage of the title of the thriller ("Torture") and, therefore, plays with it by using it against the thriller itself, which gives a comic-ironic effect in order to warn his readers about watching the programme in question.

5.2.2 Maxim of Quantity

It was briefly shown in 5.2, by means of an example of Leech's (1983), how an ironic interpretation can be the outcome of the violation of the Maxim of Quantity.

Brown & Levinson present an example of "understatement" violating the Quantity Maxim which seems to be perfect also as an example of ironic utterance (though they do not contemplate such a possibility). This is the case of <<a teenage girl that might say "He's all right" as an understated criticism implicating "I think he's awful" or as an understated compliment implicating "I think he's fabulous">> (1987: 218). In this way, the Maxim of Quantity is flouted by avoiding the lower points in the case of a criticism and by avoiding the upper points in the case of a compliment or admission.

In the following example, Dorothy is being ironical about Blanche's "experience" with men, and by not making further comments or not arguing any longer (i.e. saying less than required), she implies that Blanche has a reputation for having dated a lot of men:

[1] Blanche: You think Dirk looks at me and sees an old woman?. He sees a young, vibrant, passionate contemporary.

Dorothy: Blanche, you haven't even been out with him yet.

Blanche: My instincts are infallible about this. Believe me. I Know men.

Dorothy: No arguments here.

(GG, 1991: 71-2)

Dorothy is violating the maxim of Quantity but not the Maxim of Quality. It can be said of this example (as well as of examples 1 and 2 in the previous section) that the speaker is telling the truth; however, she is being ironic. The fact of not contradicting Blanche seems to show agreement between Dorothy and Blanche, but this agreement turns against Blanche because, by saying that she has no arguments against Blanche, Dorothy is implying that Blanche knows men too well, and, therefore, the apparent agreement turns into a criticism, and here is the source of the irony.

Another instance which I believe supports my argument here is the following exchange between Bernard and Humphrey, in which Humphrey is being uncooperative and sarcastic by flouting the Quantity Maxim, for he is not as informative as required and expected by the situation:

[2] Bernard: What are we supposed to do about it?

Humphrey: Can you keep a secret?

Bernard: Of course!

Humphrey: So can I.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Humphrey and Bernard had been previously discussing the problems of the "open government" policy of the Minister (Mr. Hacker), and Humphrey now lets Bernard infer that he has a secret plan against the Minister by saying "Can you keep a secret?", to which Bernard answers "of course", expecting that the logical consequence of saying so will be the immediate telling of the secret on the part of Humphrey; however, contrary to his expectations (and those of the audience's), Humphrey replies, "so can I", which is a sarcastic way of saying, "I don't trust you, consequently, I won't tell you the secret". He is, therefore, being uncooperative by breaking the Quantity Maxim (giving less information than required), which triggers a humorous and ironic effect. Again, it can not be said that the ironic speaker (Humphrey in this case) is not telling the truth. He is saying something that is true (i.e., that he can keep a secret) but which, nevertheless, has an ironical effect (mainly based on the contradiction between the expectations of the hearer (Bernard) and the actual reaction of the speaker (Humphrey)).

5.2.3 Maxim of Relevance

The way in which Grice stated that this Maxim should be accomplished (i.e. by "making one's contribution relevant") has been interpreted differently by different authors. Brown and Levinson consider that there are some off record strategies in which the Maxim of Relevance is violated, such as: a) "Give hints", b) "Give association clues" and c) "Presuppose" (1987: 215-17). The interpretation given is the following: "If the speaker says something that is not explicitly relevant, he invites the hearer to search for an interpretation of possible relevance" (1987: 213), and this, I believe, is something that can also happen when someone is being ironic.

Brown & Levinson show that one way of violating the Maxim of Relevance is by using euphemisms. In the following chunk of dialogue, Dorothy uses a euphemism ("pillow talk") to be ironical towards Blanche, and Sophia goes even further with the ironic tone set up by Dorothy:

[1] Rose: Your date is over?

Blanche: You sound surprised.

Dorothy: Well, it's just that your dates usually end with a little -pillow talk.

Sophia: Yeah, like, "What did you say your name was again?"

(GG, 1991: 186)

Dorothy uses a euphemism to express her surprise about Blanche having finished a date without going to bed with the man in

question. In addition, she uses the word "little", which is functioning as a hedge here and is ironical, too, because Blanche has a reputation for always experiencing great and repetitive "sessions of pillow talk". The background knowledge of Blanche's character triggers this humorous and ironic effect, which becomes even more humorous and sarcastic after Sophia's comment on the kind of "pillow talk": it is obvious that, by saying that Blanche asks her lovers about their names when they are in bed, Sophia implies that Blanche goes to bed with any unknown man she comes across, and this is interpreted by the audience as an bitter ironic (sarcastic) criticism.

Brown & Levinson admit that some indirect criticisms could fall within the first strategy they consider as violating the Relevance Maxim, i.e., "Give hints", but they add that the construction of hints for indirect criticisms involves complex processes beyond the scope of their paper and even beyond their "present understanding" (1987: 215).

I believe that it is not difficult to see that all instances of ironic criticism involve "Giving hints" on the part of the speaker, since they are pieces of indirect criticism, and, consequently, some hint has to be given in order to understand the message conveyed. Perhaps this is why David Holdcroft notes that "an ironical text is full of violations of the maxims of Relevance and Manner" (1983: 506).

I shall turn to one more example found in the corpus which can be interpreted as a violation of the Relevance Maxim with an ironic intention. Examine the following dyad between

Hacker (the Minister of Administrative Affairs) and Humphrey (his Private Secretary) after Humphrey makes the Minister realise that he has "put his foot in" and that the Prime Minister is very upset with him (Hacker). Hacker is now frightened and asks:

[2] Hacker: What's going to happen?

Humphrey: The Prime Minister giveth, and the Prime Minister taketh away.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Apparently, Humphrey is not being relevant here, because, instead of answering what is going to happen directly, he indirectly (by using sarcastic echoic irony) says that Hacker will be dismissed by the Prime Minister. Humphrey does not say this "bold on record"; instead, he gives hints and association clues to make Hacker understand what will happen, which causes a humorous effect for the audience, who also rejoices in observing Humphrey's cynicism.

Some comment should be made here about the fact that there are authors, such as Sperber & Wilson, who believe that the Relevance Principle is never violated, for they support the idea that "Relevance may be achieved by expressing irrelevant assumptions, as long as this expressive behaviour is in itself relevant" (1986: 121). Then the relevance of ironic utterances lies in the information it gives about the speaker's attitude towards the "attributed thought" (for, as we saw in 4.3, in their opinion, ironic utterances are always cases of echoic use of attributed thoughts). This interpretation of the Principle of

Relevance is evidently wider than the one given by Brown & Levinson. From the standpoint of Relevance Theory, communicators could not violate the principle of relevance even if they wanted to (1986: 162). There are, according to Sperber & Wilson, many situations where the speaker who is aiming at optional relevance should not give a literal interpretation of his/her thought, and where the hearer should not treat his/her utterance as literal (1986: 233). This is a valid position, but the argument put forward in this section has to do with the way in which the violation of the Maxim of Relevance is presented in Brown & Levinson's Theory of Politeness. Following their reasoning (as well as Grice's), the Maxim of Relevance can be flouted sometimes, and this, I have tried to show, can also be the case for ironic utterances.

5.2.4 Maxim of Manner

An argument can also be put forward in favour of the possibility of violation of the Maxim of Manner by ironic speakers in some cases. In many instances, the speaker is not "perspicuous", at least in two respects: he is both obscure and ambiguous. He may be brief and orderly, but, when going off record, he will not precisely try to avoid obscurity and ambiguity. He will most probably be obscure and/or ambiguous in order to minimise the FTA or to avoid responsibility. This would apply perfectly to most ironic utterances, in which the implicatures are cancellable, though not to those cases of

conventionalised or implicature-free verbal irony in which the implicatures are not cancellable or there is no conversational implicature to be worked out (see 3.3.1 and 7.2.2).

Following is an example from the *London Lund Corpus of English Conversation*, in which two female secretaries are talking about another woman. By saying that this woman "is not of the most helpful variety", C is being ambiguous (because she does not clearly say that she is unhelpful), and, at the same time, she is ironically criticising her (the intonation with a falling tone on "helpful" and a rising one on "variety", as well as the laughter, also help decipher the ironic interpretation, as will be shown and discussed in Chapter 6):

[1]

```

C 11 . and [[:] they ^don't 'seem to b/other _any_body# /
A 11 ^n\o# /
C 11 they ^seem to 'know their 'way ar/ound# /
A 11 so it ^d\oes 'seem# /
A 11 a ^fairly 'self-con'tained *'unit 'on its \own## /
C 11 *it ^\is# /
C 11 ^v\ery 'self-con'tained## /
A 11 ^y\es# /
C 11 ^and I !think one of the :reasons Miss 'Baker /
C 11 sug:gest((ed)) I 'show you ((a))r\ound# /
C 11 I ^don't think you've met :Nelly 'Cartwright /
C 11 up:st\airs# /
A 11 ^n\o# /
(C 11 ^I won't ![pri: - @:~] - - - wh\at's the 'word# - /
C 11 ^pre-per!su\ade you# /
C 11 but [[:] *-~ - she's ^not of the most :h\elpful /
C 11 **.** var/iet\y# . /
A 11 *(laughs - - )* **^y\eah### /
C 11 [[:~] ^I don't kn\ow# /
C 11 you ^may 'hit it :\off with her# /

```

(LLC, S.1.5.)

The Maxim of Quantity seems also to have been flouted in this

example, for C is being "less informative than required" by minimising in some way the expression referring to Ms Cartwright's unhelpfulness.

Apart from the fact that prototypical cases of irony violate the Quality Maxim, all of these cases could be said to be ambiguous, in which case they would violate the Maxim of Manner as well. The following passage from one of Bertrand Russell's essays seems to illustrate one of these cases:

<<Some astronomers try to cheer us up in moments of depression by assuring us that one fine day the sun will explode, and in the twinkling of an eye we shall all be turned into gas>>

(BR, 1958: 31)

Strictly speaking, Russell could be accused here of being obscure and ambiguous for not saying directly that, by foretelling that we are all doomed to such a fate, astronomers are not cheering us up and that the day in which the sun will explode will not be a fine day. But this violation of both the Quality and the Manner Maxims of the Cooperative Principle serves Russell's ironic purposes of criticising those people who, in his opinion, "imagine themselves on the throne of the Almighty" (1958: 31).

The analysis and examples presented hitherto seem to give evidence confirming Hypothesis n° 7, which tries to show that irony is not only related to the Maxim of Quality, but also to the other three Gricean Maxims (Quantity, Relevance and Manner). Quantitative data for a further confirmation of this

hypothesis will be given in 7.2.2.1.

In any case, the view of irony as violating the Gricean Maxims illuminates the nature of propositional irony, as Holdcroft (1983) states. For cases of illocutionary irony, perhaps the explanation founded on the violation of the maxims is not that illuminating, for, as Holdcroft observes:

<<The illocutionary ironist on a direct reading may breach no maxim: indeed, perhaps the only clue that he is being ironic is the fact that he is so uncritically fulsome.>> (1983: 507).

The observation of this fact, and its confirmation through several examples found in the corpora used in this investigation, led me to conclude that there is a type of verbal irony that could be labelled as "implicature-free", for when using this type, the speaker/writer flouts no maxim but is nevertheless ironic (see 7.2.2).

5.3 Irony in relation to Positive and Negative Politeness

As was anticipated in the Introduction to this chapter and discussed in a previous paper (Alba Juez, 1995c), after analysing and studying many of the examples in the corpus, I noticed that, in many instances, the ironic speaker was clearly addressing not only the hearer's positive needs, but also his negative face needs, which would entail that this kind of speaker not only makes use of off record strategies but also of on record ones, since, as Brown & Levinson state in their theory (and as can be seen in their chart, reproduced here in 5.1), Positive and

Negative Politeness are substrategies of the higher order strategy on record.

In other words, what I have observed is that sometimes the speaker chooses to be ironic precisely because s/he wants to make concessions to his/her own or the hearer's positive face, or in other cases, to his/her own or the hearer's negative face. Thus, when going off record, a speaker is also using on record strategies. Saving face seems to be a concern for both on record and off record speakers. Then, redressive action can also be a characteristic of off record FTAs.

Brown & Levinson do in fact believe that there may exist a kind of "on record-off recordness" only in some special cases such as the one shown when using conventionally indirect requests as a negative politeness strategy (e.g. "Could you please pass the salt?", which should not be interpreted as a question about the addressee's potential abilities). They also acknowledge that:

<<Many of the classic off record strategies -metaphor, irony, understatement, rhetorical questions, etc- are very often on record when used, because the clues to their interpretation (the mutual knowledge of S and H in the context, the intonational, prosodic and kinesic clues to speaker's attitude; the clues derived from conversational sequencing) add up to only one really viable interpretation in the context.>> (1987: 212)

From these lines, I infer that Brown & Levinson would think of on record-off recordness for irony only in those cases in which it is conventionalised, and there can be no other possible interpretation. However, they never go too deeply into the analysis of irony and they do not put forward any arguments about

what they understand to be conventionalised instances of irony. I have already presented (in 3.3.1) instances of what I judge to be conventionalised and non-conventionalised verbal irony, and, with respect to the issue discussed in this section, I believe, contrary to Brown & Levinson- that an ironic speaker can use both on record and off record strategies even when using non-conventionalised verbal irony. This can be seen in the examples I shall present of what I shall call "Positive" and "Negative Irony".

5.3.1 Positive and Negative Irony

As was discussed in 4.3.1.2 (and shown by means of corpus examples), not all cases of irony convey a derogatory attitude. Some authors [Cicero (circa 100 BC), King & Crerar (1969), Haverkate (1988), Holdcroft (1983), Norrick (1994), Lakoff (1972), Leech (1983), Kaufer (1983), Muecke (1970)] hold the belief that it can also convey praise or some positive feeling towards the hearer, in opposition to some others, like Brown & Levinson or Sperber & Wilson, who state that verbal irony always has a deprecating nature.

I also tried to show in 4.3.1.2 that there is apparently a third kind of verbal irony which is intended neither to criticise nor to praise, which could be considered as "neutral". The first two kinds of irony, i.e., "derogatory irony" and "praising irony", seem to be in close connection with positive and negative politeness. It is my impression that

derogatory irony is always a strategy that has to do mainly with Negative Politeness and the negative face of the addressee, and that praising irony has to do mainly with Positive Politeness and the Positive face of the addressee. Hence, I shall call the former *Negative Irony* and the latter *Positive Irony*. If someone is praising another person -be it by means of irony or by any other means- he or she is carrying out redressive action directed to the addressee's positive face (i.e. his perennial desire that his wants (or actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable). We may also encounter certain instances of positive irony in which the intention is not precisely to praise, but in which the speaker still addresses the positive face of the addressee, as can be deduced, for instance, from the observations made by Leech (1983) and Kasper(1990) about the speech "sounding" described by Labov (1972) as exchanges of "ritual insults" by New York black adolescents. Kasper describes ritual insults as instances of "ironic rudeness" and "mock impoliteness" (1990: 211). Leech presents them as instances of "banter" or "mock irony"(1983: 144-5). Booth (1974) also writes about a kind of ironic attack which takes the form of pretended satire and often expresses distance or hostility, but which social custom requires to be taken without deep offense. He illustrates his point with some African tribes in whose culture this form of teasing depends on a relation between two persons (or even two tribes) in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other, who, in turn, is required to take no offence. A similar situation is

found in the "flyting " of some "joking relationships" in some English dialects (1974: 30).

When the speaker is using negative irony to criticise someone, s/he is carrying out redressive action directed to the addressee's negative face in the sense that s/he is making an effort not to surpass the hearer's territory in an excessive way. Thus, by being ambiguous and indirect, the speaker is trying not to impede the hearer's wants or actions. Then, it is often the case that an ironic speaker uses Negative Politeness to criticise or make his/her hearer feel inferior, as will be seen in some examples in the corpus. Leech explains this phenomenon by saying that, whereas "overpoliteness" can have the effect of signifying superiority or ironic distance, underpoliteness can have the opposite effect of establishing or maintaining a bond of familiarity (1983: 144).

Sometimes Positive and Negative Irony can co-occur in the same utterance. Suppose that I have a friend who is not very self confident, and, after doing an exam, he says to me:

"I'm going to fail this exam. I did it all wrong."

After some days I meet him and he tells me that he has passed the exam with a very good mark. Then I could ironically say (and this would also be a clear example of echoic mention):

"Oh, yes, you have failed, you did it all wrong, you are an awful student!"

In this particular context, I would be criticising and praising my friend at the same time. I would criticise his previous self-deprecating attitude, but I would also be praising him by

implicating that I think he is better and cleverer than he himself had thought he was.

The above discussion has led me to conclude that hypothesis n°8 can be accepted, i.e. Positive and Negative Politeness can also be substrategies on an off record strategy, for as it has been argued and will be shown in the examples, a speaker can be ironic with Positive Politeness (and thus serve certain purposes) or he can be ironic with Negative Politeness (and thus serve certain other purposes).

A good example of the fact that irony can be combined with Positive Politeness is provided by Brown & Levinson, although they present it only as an instance of an "on record with Positive Politeness" strategy, namely, strategy n° 8: "Joke". Brown & Levinson note that a speaker could be joking and say to his friend:

"How about lending me this old heap of junk? (H's new Cadillac)" (1987: 124)

Since both friends know that the car is a new Cadillac and consequently that it is by no means "an old heap of junk", apart from understanding that this is a joke, the hearer will also understand that s/he should not take his/her friend literally, and that, on the contrary, his/her friend is addressing his/her positive face and wants to signify that s/he admires his/her new car or, in more technical terms, that "s/he wants his wants". This is a prototypical case of "irony with Positive Politeness", i.e., Positive Irony (in which the speaker wants to maintain the hearer's positive face).

The following passage, taken from a pamphlet written by Jonathan Swift [quoted by King & Crerar (1969)] is proof of the possibility of combination of irony with Negative Politeness. It is endowed with all the formality and "conventional indirectness" typical of Negative Politeness strategies, but at the same time is an example of the sardonic criticism characteristic of Negative Irony:

<<Another advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity is the clear gain of one day in seven, which is now entirely lost, and consequently the kingdom one seventh less considerable in trade, business, and pleasure; besides the loss to the public of so many stately structures, now in the hands of the clergy, which might be converted into playhouses, market-houses, exchanges, common dormitories, and other public edifices.

I hope I shall be forgiven a hard word, if I call this a perfect cavil. I readily own there has been an old custom, time out of mind, for people to assemble in the churches every Sunday, and that shops are still frequently shut, in order, as it is conceived, to preserve the memory of that ancient practice; but how this can prove a hindrance to business or pleasure, is hard to imagine. What if the men of pleasure are forced, one day in the week, to game at home instead of the chocolate-houses? are not the taverns and coffee-houses open? can there be a more convenient season for taking a dose of physic? is not that the chief day for traders to sum up the accounts of the week, and for lawyers to prepare their briefs?. But I would fain know how it can be pretended that the churches are mis-applied?. Where are more appointments and rendezvouses of gallantry? where more care to appear in the foremost box, with greater advantage of dress? where more meetings for business? where more bargains driven of all sorts? and where so many conveniences or enticements to sleep?>>

(1969: 128-9)

Obviously, Swift's diction suggests a period remote to our own, but in familiar every day present language, it seems to be often the case that we use Negative Politeness together with irony.

If, for instance, a woman does not want her husband to be rude to her (e.g. when requesting something) and always tells him that he should be more "polite" (in the common sense of the word) to her, the husband might make a future request in either of the following sardonic ironical ways (presenting a "clash" between speech acts, i.e. irony at the illocutionary level -see 3.4 and 7.2.3-)

"Excuse me for bothering you, but would you be so kind as to make me a cup of coffee?"

or:

"Will Her Majesty prepare me a cup of coffee?"

which would mean: "it sounds ridiculous to me to treat you this way, but considering you want me to be polite, I am mocking you by being polite in an exaggerated way (Leech's "overpoliteness"). Haverkate presents a similar example illustrating this kind of illocutionary irony:

"Could you do me the favour of shutting up?" (1988: 85)

Leech's ironic example "Do you have to spill ash on the carpet?" (1983: 143) and Searle's "Ought you to eat quite so much spaghetti?" (1975: 66) seem to be also valid to support my argument here.

Many examples of this combination of off record and on record strategies were found in the corpus. I now turn to them.

5.3.2 Corpus examples of verbal irony used in combination with Positive and/or Negative Politeness

I have observed in the wide variety of ironic examples

in the corpus that some typical devices of Negative Politeness are very often used in ironical remarks. I refer to hedges and/or indirect conventionalised questions. Consider the following conversation between Rose and the Reverend Avery:

[1] Reverend
Avery: Well, before we open the doors, I just want to thank you all for taking time away from your own Christmas to provide Christmas for some that are less fortunate. We promise to turn away no one, remembering how Mary and Joseph were turned away at the inn,

Rose: Reverend Avery -it's always puzzled me; why didn't Mary and Joseph call ahead for reservations?. Surely they must have realized how impossible it is to get a hotel room during the Christmas season

Reverend
Avery: I guess that's one for the theologians, Rose.

(GG, 1991: 160)

In his last remark, the Reverend is ironical about Rose's previous comment (implying that it was irrelevant and silly), but, at the same time, he is trying not to be rude (and therefore trying to maintain her negative face by not imposing on her or impeding her actions) by using the hedge "I guess". This hedge has the effect of softening the following observation ("That's one for the theologians") which is certainly ironic, for anyone would laugh at the possibility of such a silly observation being a serious matter to be analysed by theologians.

Hedges constitute a device that allows the speaker to show that he does not try to "trespass" the hearer's or a third person's territory. In the following example, the speaker (A) tries to soften the criticism he is making of the lecturer they are talking about (a third and absent person) by using the hedge

"I'm not quite sure...", although he is in fact being ironic and "economical with the truth": he really means that in his opinion, the lecture was useless:

[2]

A	11	^oh d\ear#	/
A	12	^what was 'he - ^I can't even re!member !what he	/
A	12	was d/\oing#	/
A	11	the ^day I :went to his :l\ecture#	/
A	11	but ^I re!member that 'he - :brought 'out !thr\ee	/
A	11	'things _in# .	/
A	11	"^Old /English#	/
A	12	((^you !cl\assicists)) [??] ^you've _probably not	/
A	12	!d\one Old /English#	/
A	11	^h\ave 'you# -	/
A	11	^c\ourse you 'haven't# - -	/
A	11	^bin_dan 'rin_dan _and w\in'dan#	/
A	11	the ^three v\erbs#	/
A	11	^([?]all . ((are)) rh/yming#	/
A	11	^and 'they !\all ((are)) :d=oing#	/
A	11	with ^something 'going :r\ound#	/
A	11	^bin_dan to b/ind#	/
A	11	^win_dan to w\ind#	/
A	11	and . ^rin'dan :to . "lr\ind#	/
A	11	you ^kn/ow#	/
A	11	a ^p\ig#	/
A,B	20	(- - laugh)	/
B	11	*(- - - laughs)* **^[/\m]#**	/
A	11	^^this is the !only thing I've 'brought a!!w\ay	/
A	11	from that l/ecture#	/
A	11	~* - - I'm ^not quite 'sure what he was . trying	/
A	11	***to** . pr\ove with th/em#	/
A	11	^when he'd !f\inished#	/
A	20	(*~* - - laughs)	/

(LLC, S.1.6.)

In this example, the irony is aimed at the negative face of the third person in question, as is the case with most situations in which two speakers are ironically criticising a third participant (present or absent). But this irony is also aimed at the positive face of the hearer or addressee, i.e., there is also positive politeness between the two interlocutors, for it is

often the case that the ironic speaker wants to show his hearer that s/he trusts him/her and that he considers him /her a "cooperator", establishing in this way a mutual complicity. As Sperber (1974) notes, "irony against a third party is an invitation to real complicity. Inversely, irony directed against the hearer is an invitation to keep one's distance" (1974: 144).

As we know (see 4.3.1), Sperber does not consider the possibility of "Positive Irony", and that is why he states that irony towards the hearer is always an invitation to keep distance. I have already spoken of the fact that irony towards the hearer can also have the intention of praising or showing positive feelings or a positive evaluation of the hearer, even when this is not so frequent a strategy as the one addressing his/her negative face. I now turn to one of these less frequently found cases:

[3]

B	11	^=um# -	/
B	12	^[?]it's [?] . ^w\ell# .	/
B	11	^I'm . em!{pl\oyed as a) :mathemalt\ician# -	/
B	11	sta^tistics is what I :sh\ould know#	/
B	11	((and)) I ^don't know 'anything a:b\out it#	/
B	11	"^r\eally#	/
A	20	(- . laughs)	/
(B	11	^pr\ogramming (com^p\uters#)# -	/
B	11	*{(^th\at's what /I do#))*	/
A	11	*^y\es#	/
A	11	do* ^you know 'Malcolm B\owen#	/
A	11	^over at the comp\uter /unit#	/
B	11	^[m]#	/
A	11	^nice b/oy# -	/
A	11	^sure lhe'd h/elp you#	/
A	11	if you ^got st\uck#	/
B	20	(- - laughs) -	/

(LLC, S.1.6.)

When A (a female academic) says that Malcom could help B (a male

academic) if B got stuck, she is ironical and she is joking, for B has just said that programming computers is precisely what he does, so she is in fact addressing his positive face by implicating that he needs no help and that it is very unlikely that he would ever get stuck. The laughter coming afterwards shows that, in effect, it has been interpreted as an ironical joke on B's part.

Returning to the use of ironic Negative Politeness as a weapon against a third party and a sign of complicity between interlocutors, consider this remark by Bertrand Russell:

- [4] <<Cruelty is in theory a perfectly adequate ground for divorce, but it may be interpreted so as to become absurd. When the most eminent of all film stars was divorced by his wife for cruelty, one of the counts in the proof of cruelty was that he used to bring home friends who talked about Kant. I can hardly suppose that it was the intention of the California legislators to enable any woman to divorce her husband on the ground that he was sometimes guilty of intelligent conversation in her presence.>>

(BR, 1958: 72-3)

The sarcasm of Russell's final comment here lies in the use of the Negative Politeness hedge "I can hardly suppose..", which simulates consideration for and innocent belief about the California legislators, but which ironically implicates that he does suspect them of being rather ignorant and scarcely intelligent, to such an extent that they dare to condemn people because they can maintain intelligent conversation. Thus, the aggressive or Negative Irony is here directed against the legislators (a third party), whereas he establishes certain complicity with his readers, which implies the use of Positive

Politeness towards them. It is as if he said: "You and I know that this is wrong, so I make you my accomplice in criticising and condemning this behaviour or these ideas". In general, this is always the case with all of Russel's argumentative writing. He is very critical of social conventions, religion, politics and other aspects of human life, and he expects his readers to share his views and ideas.

A similar example, though different in that the Negative Politeness is directed against the hearer, is found in one comment made by the President of Buranda in a conversation with Hacker (the British Minister of Administrative Affairs) in the television series *"Yes Minister"*:

[5] Hacker: Oh, Charlie, may I speak frankly? We are friends, aren't we?

President
of Buranda: Of course.

Hacker: You must realise that bit about colonialist depression was a bit, well, very, well, actually profoundly embarrassing.

P of B: Why?

Hacker: That passage in which you urge the Scots and the Irish to uh, eh... I wonder if you could uh, give it a miss.

P of B: Give it a miss??

Hacker: Yes.

P of B: But this is something I feel very, very deeply to be true. Surely the British don't believe in suppressing the truth.

Hacker: Good Heavens, No!

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Official Visit")

On his visit to Britain, the President of Buranda has not been favourable to the British Government both in his comments and written documents. Hacker is trying to use their old friendship (they were classmates at College) in order to "hush him up". The President of Buranda then uses irony with Negative Politeness (so that he can sound "polite") to show that he can not be bribed or threatened easily. "Surely the British don't believe in suppressing the truth" is a hedged ironical remark that addresses Hacker's negative face and leaves him no way out and no more possibilities of trying to bribe the president of Buranda. In fact, the President does think that the British want to suppress the truth, given the evidence of Hacker's intent to make him withdraw his previous public criticisms against British colonialism.

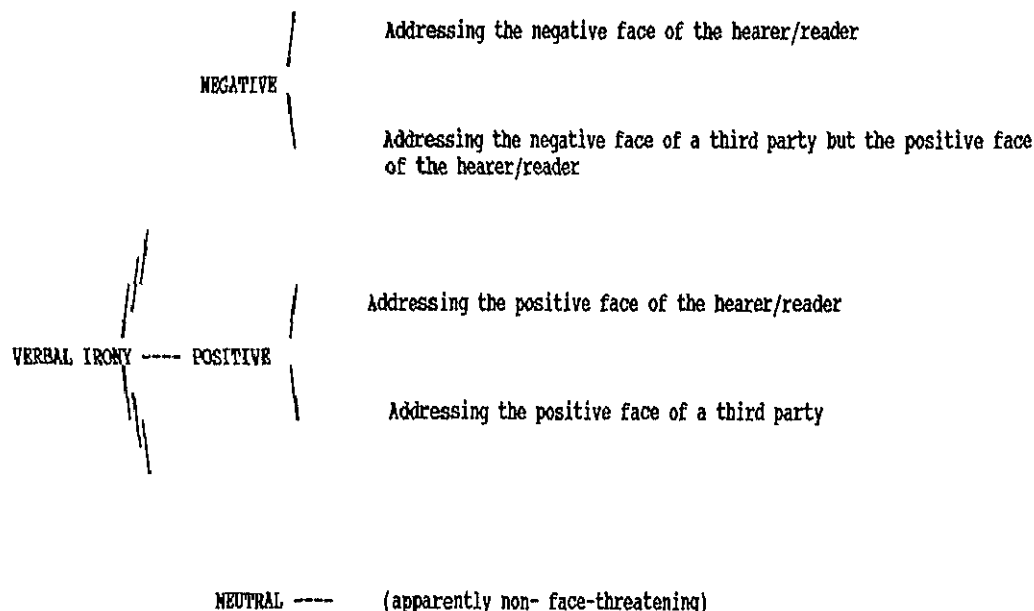
5.3.3 Irony and Positive/Negative Politeness: recapitulation

The examples discussed in the previous section, as well as a careful meditation on the phenomenon of irony in the light of Politeness Theory, have led me to conclude that, in effect, both Positive and Negative Politeness may be used as tools to convey ironic meanings. It has been shown that these two kinds of politeness may be both directed either to the positive or the negative face of the addressee, or to both faces simultaneously. As has been explained and shown in previous chapters (3 and 4), a speaker may sometimes be ironic but neutral, which implies he is neither criticising nor praising or making any kind of

evaluation. In this particular case, the ironic utterance does not seem to threaten anybody's face, in which case it would be logical to think that some ironic remarks can not be considered FTAs⁶. From these considerations I have come to the conclusion that there are three main kinds of verbal irony: *Positive*, *Negative* and *Neutral*, and, within these three main categories, there are numerous substrategies (as will be shown in chapter 8).

The possibilities exploited in this chapter are illustrated in Figure 5.b:

Figure 5.b: Main irony types viewed from the Politeness perspective



⁶ Indeed, Bruce Fraser points out that, although all acts are inherently FTAs because they require the hearer to do work to understand the speaker's communicative intentions, "nearly all (perhaps all) acts can be construed as non-FTAs under appropriate circumstances" (1990: 229).

I have not found instances in the corpus of positive irony addressing the positive face of a third party, but the example quoted by King & Crerar (1969: 116-7) and discussed in this dissertation in 4.3.1.2 is proof of its possibility of occurrence. King & Crerar present it as an instance of irony used to convey praise. I am referring to the speech delivered by the chairman of a testimonial dinner in honour of Mr. Frank Faulkner. The chairman is addressing the audience and uses irony with Positive Politeness towards Mr. Frank Faulkner (the third party), for he speaks about some "flaws" of character that Mr. Faulkner had, which should be interpreted as an ironical way of saying that he had no flaws, and that he was indeed a great person.

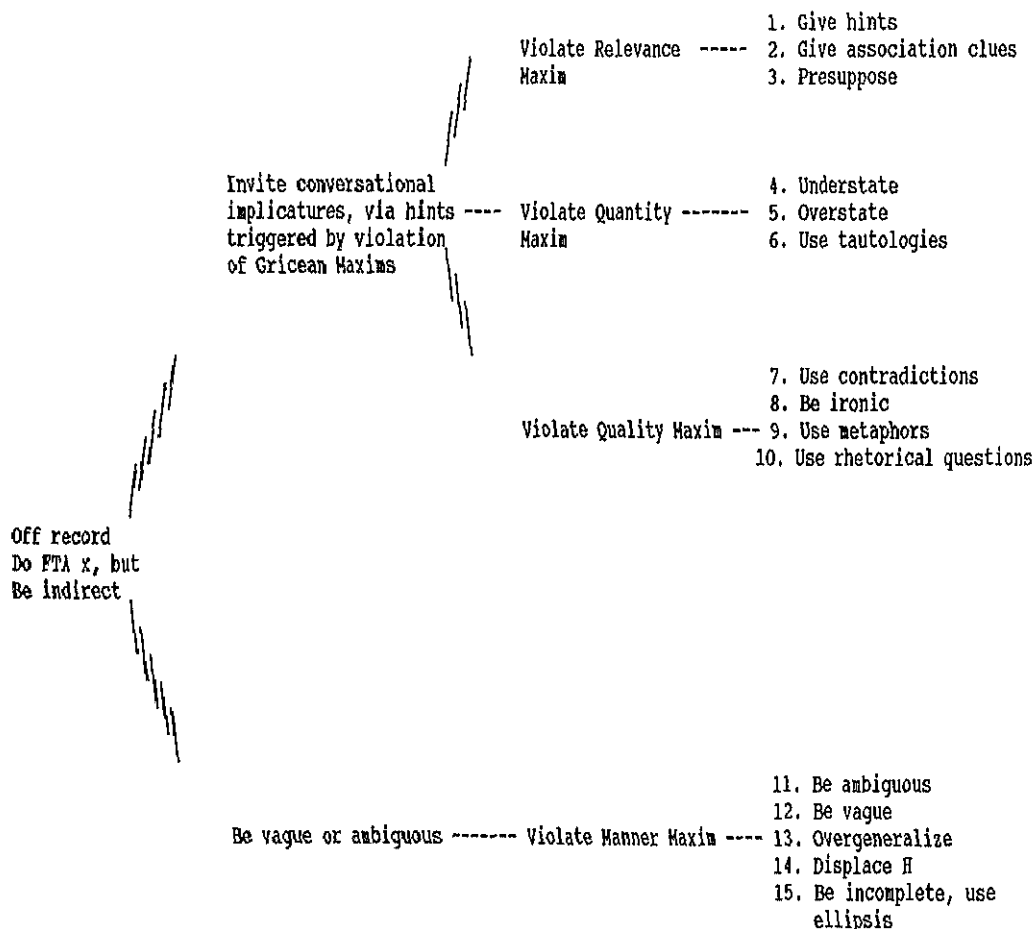
Up to this point in this chapter, I have been discussing the possibility of the combination of two on record strategies (Positive and Negative Politeness) with off record irony. The next step will be to analyse the possibility of the combination of verbal irony with the other off record strategies in the taxonomy created by Brown & Levinson.

5.4 Irony and the other off record strategies

Figure 5.c reproduces the chart in which Brown & Levinson present their taxonomy of off record strategies. As may have been anticipated (after considering the possibility of violation of other maxims on the part of an ironic speaker), it has been observed in this investigation that a speaker may make

use of any of these off record strategies to convey an ironic meaning.

Figure 5.c: Chart of off record strategies (in Brown & Levinson's model)



(1987: 214)

The first strategy in the chart ("Give hints") is a strategy that could be said to be used in most cases of irony if we consider that the speaker is not being "direct" (as was discussed in 5.2.3). This strategy is very tightly related to the second one ("Give association clues"). That a speaker can be ironic by giving hints and association clues can be confirmed when analysing the following passage:

- [1] <<Men who allow their love of power to give them a distorted view of the world are to be found in every asylum: one man will think he is the Governor of the Bank of England, another will think he is the King, and yet another will think he is God. Highly similar delusions, if expressed by educated men in obscure language, lead to professorships of Philosophy; and if expressed by emotional men in eloquent language lead to dictatorships>>.

(BR, 1958: 25)

Russell is giving association clues and consequently giving hints to the reader, who, by making comparisons, will be led to the conclusion that professors of Philosophy and dictators are lunatics. This strategy constitutes an indirect criticism, which displays ironic intentions on the part of Russell, who tries to show how close to lunacy dictators and philosophers are, in spite of the fact that they try to hide this situation, be it by means of either "obscure" or "eloquent" language. There is an implied contrast between "apparently sane" people and "apparently mad" people, stressing the fact that we may be deceived by appearances.

The third off record strategy in the chart (Presuppose) can also be used for ironic purposes. Brown & Levinson admit

that in their example:

"I washed the car again today" (1987: 217)

the word "again" presupposes that he has washed the car before, and this in an appropriate context (when S and H have agreed to share the task) "may implicate a criticism" (1987: 217). The same holds for their other example:

"At least 'I don't go around boasting about 'my achievements" (1987: 217)

where the contrastive stress on "I" and "my", together with the phrase "at least" presuppose that someone does or did go around boasting, and, consequently, it can be said to be ironical, considering it is an indirect criticism in which there is an implied contrast.

To take an example from the corpus, consider the presupposition implied in Dorothy's ironic question:

[2] (Blanche enters, wearing light jacket)

Blanche: Ohh, here you all are.

Dorothy: How'd your physical go?

Blanche: Oh, just fine. The doctor could not believe it when I told him my age.

Dorothy: Why, what age did you tell him?

(GG, 1991: 175)

The final question, and especially the words "what age", presuppose that Blanche may well have lied to the doctor with respect to her age. It also shows an ironical criticism against Blanche, implicating that she certainly looks her age, but that only in the case that she lied could the doctor have made such

a remark (that she did not look her age). The irony also lies in the implied contrast between her real age and the age she told the doctor she was.

Another example of ironic presupposition is found again in Dorothy's words when talking to Blanche after she comes back from hospital:

[3] Blanche: I am not back to my old self. As a matter of fact, I may never be.

Dorothy: What are you talking about, Blanche?

Blanche: Listen, I know this sounds crazy, and if it hadn't happened to me I wouldn't believe it either, but while I was being operated on, I had an out-of-body experience! I was... floating... looking down at myself. I -it was like... it was like...

Dorothy: What, the mirror on your bedroom ceiling?

(GG, 1991: 182)

The determiner "your" in Dorothy's final rhetorical question presupposes that Blanche has a mirror on her bedroom ceiling, which indirectly constitutes a "hint" about her bedroom habits. Dorothy is again being sarcastic and trying to implicate that these habits are not very "decent".

It has already been shown (briefly) in this study (see 5.2.2) that irony can also be conveyed by means of understatement (a way of generating implicatures by saying less than is required) or overstatement (a way of generating implicatures by saying more than necessary, i.e. exaggerating or choosing a point on a scale which is higher than is warranted by the actual state of affairs). These are strategies 4 and 5 in the off record chart. I shall enlarge the data given by providing two more

examples from the corpora, the first of which is an instance of understatement and the second of which is an instance of overstatement. In the first one, two academics are criticising the changing character of the Head of Department. They have previously said that he is a moody person and that, one day, he has great arguments with somebody about something, and, the next day, he expounds that person's views as his own with great conviction, never admitting he was wrong. B understates by hedging on the amount of criticism he is willing to make with such expressions as "a bit" or "in a way", which, together with their laughter (and the falling-rising intonation given to key words) also allow for an ironic interpretation:

[4]

B	11	*((but . ^that !is only :n\atural#))*	/
(A	11	a ^ra*ther 'weak ch\aracter#	/
A	11	^d\oesn't it#	/
B	11	^m\ay'be#	/
B	20	*((untranscribable murmur))*	/
A	11	*^not 'quite b\ig e'nough#	/
A	11	to ^go* and 'say l\ook old 'chap#	/
A	11	^y\ou were r\ight# -	/
A	11	or per^haps not _even _big e_nough _to .	/
A	11	r\ecog'nize#	/
B	11	I ^got the im:pr\ession#	/
B	11	that he ^didn't !r\ecog'nize it# .	/
A	11	^n\o#	/
A	11	*^pr\obably#	/
B	12	*^that '[@:]([m]))* - he ^just di!g\ested the	/
B	12	'id/eas#	/
B	11	and ^then _came _out with _them _quite	/
B	11	spont_aneously and without relfl\ection#	/
B	21	*((but it's a)) ^bit*	/
A	11	*^[m]#*	/
(B	11	d/\ifficult#	/
B	11	in a ^w\ay# -	/
B	11	that a ^person could be "!s\o unre"fl/ective#	/
B	11	as ^not to _r/\ealize#	/
B	11	that he'd ^ch\anged his m/ind#	/
B	20	*(- laughs)*	/

(LLC, S.1.6.)

The hedges "a bit" and "in a way" are here used in order to ironically soften or minimise the ironic fact that the Head of Department first argues against another person's idea and then uses that idea as if it were his. Thus, in this example there is a display of the two main kinds of irony: verbal and situational. It can be said that the speaker is verbally ironic because he uses linguistic hedges like "a bit" or "in a way" when he, in fact, means that it is very difficult to understand that a person could be so contradictory. In addition, there is situational irony precisely in this contradictory nature of the person that is being criticised.

The second example is one in which exaggeration (overstatement) is used with ironic purposes:

[5] Blanche: I've decided I can handle this relationship. I'm going out with Dirk Saturday night.

Dorothy: Was it ever in doubt?

Blanche: Momentarily. This is strictly off the record, but Dirk is nearly five years younger than I am.

Dorothy: In what, Blanche? Dog years??

(GG, 1991: 65)

This is one more instance showing Dorothy's aggressiveness towards Blanche by being sarcastic and again implying that Blanche is a liar. Dorothy wants to say that Dirk is certainly much younger than what Blanche asserts he is, and she achieves this effect by making a question that displays exaggeration and pungent criticism.

I have not found examples in the corpus of strategy n°6

("use tautologies"), but I have heard ironic speakers use tautologies and do it for their ironic purposes. The example that comes to my mind is one in which echoic irony is used: An American (academic) friend of mine was having a conversation with a British professor. My friend praising the "American way of life", saying that America was a land of freedom and opportunity, etc., and he concluded his turn by saying:

"America, my dear professor, is America."

with which he meant that America was a unique country in which all the perfection in the world had been concentrated. Later on, these two same people were watching the news on television, and after a succession of horrible pieces of news showing crime and misery in the U.S.A, the British professor "took revenge" and said:

"America is America, my dear friend."

The professor was evidently using the tautology in an ironic way to mean exactly the opposite my friend intended to mean in his previous and analogous comment. He tried to tell the American academic that his country was not so perfect as he thought it was, and the echoic repetition of his previous tautological remark seemed to be the perfect tool for doing it.

"Use contradictions" (strategy n° 7 in the chart) belongs in the same group as "Be ironic", and, since contradiction appears to be an intrinsic feature of irony, it can be said that these two strategies always work together. Although not all contradictions are ironic, it appears to be a fact that in all ironies a contradiction of some kind is implied. This has

been amply discussed throughout this dissertation, and, therefore, I consider it unnecessary to present examples here, since all the examples of verbal irony displayed hitherto show the working of implicit contradictions.

Ironical effects can also be achieved by means of a metaphor (strategy n°9). For example, one could ironically criticise a singer one considers to be bad by saying: "He's a nightingale!". Similarly, in the following dialogue from the *London Lund Corpus*, A refers ironically to the Board of the Faculty as a "Supreme Soviet" (a metaphor that is hedged by the particle "sort of"), after some mild criticisms concerning academic structure and its bureaucracy:

[7]

B	21	3^I	/
A	11	3*^[\m]##	/
(B	21	3thought that you were on this [@m] -	/
A	11	3^n\o# -	/
B	11	3^faculty board repre:s\entative ((2 to 3 sylls# -	/
B	11	3what^ever you c\all it#) .	/
A	11	3no [dh @] it's ^{c\alled) . board of the	/
A	11	3f\aculty# *-*	/
B	11	3*^[=mhm]##	/
(A	11	3you ^s=ee#	/
A	11	3we ^we . are members of the :faculty of \arts	/
A	11	3{^of* the uni^v/ersity#)# -	/
B	11	3*((^y/es#))*	/
(A	11	3^but . [dhi] . !faculty of \arts# .	/
A	11	3^has . [e:] a sort of - su\preme s\oviet# .	/
A	21	3*.* . which is	/
B	11	3*^[/mhm]##	/
(A	11	3called the "^\oard of the _faculty#	/
B	11	3^y\es#	/

(LLC, S.1.2.)

Asking a question with no intention of obtaining an answer (Strategy n° 10: "Use rhetorical questions) may also be

a strategy to convey ironic meanings. Brown & Levinson point out that to ask such a kind of question is "to break a sincerity condition on questions, namely, that S wants H to provide him with the indicated information" (1987: 223). They later on note that questions that leave their implicated answers hanging in the air may be used to make criticisms and thus can be mixed with irony (1987: 223). The possibility of using questions to be ironic has already been discussed in different points of this paper. I shall here present one more humorous example, in which the Minister's wife makes another of her pungent, ironical, rhetorical questions. The Minister was trying to explain to his wife that he had to set the example for the "Economy Drive" policy he was trying to carry out. He had cut down on furniture, cars and any kind of privilege he had as a Minister, and so, that day, he walked home from work. The wife complained about it, because he got home very late (as a consequence of going on foot):

[8] Hacker: Oh, darling; you don't really understand politics, do you? This way is going to bring me much more power in the end.

wife: Darling, and how are you going to travel when you're Prime Minister, hitch-hike?

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: *The Economy Drive*)

The rhetorical question is evidently showing the wife's annoyance at her husband's crazy policies, and she is at the same time mocking him and manifesting contempt towards his ideas. She uses sarcastic irony and tries to pinpoint the ridiculous situation

brought about by her husband's policies by exaggerating the next step to be taken by him: indeed, the image of a Prime Minister hitch-hiking on his way to work every day appears as ridiculous and ironic.

It has already been stated and discussed (see 5.2.4) that most instances of verbal irony seem to display some kind of ambiguity (strategy n° 11). Likewise, one may be vague or may overgeneralise (strategies 12 and 13) when being ironic. The examples given by Brown & Levinson illustrating these two strategies could also be interpreted as ironical in some particular situations. Example n° 81 (in which the speaker is vague) could, in a given context, be taken as an indirect criticism and reproach (for example, uttered by a person who is tired of his/her friend's addiction to alcohol):

(81) "Looks like someone may have had too much to drink."
(1987: 226)

Similarly, example 86 (illustrating over-generalization) could be used ironically to implicate "You're not mature" and/or "You should help me and you're not doing it":

(86) "Mature people sometimes help do the dishes." (1987: 226)

An example (from the LLC) illustrating these last two strategies is found in the words of two professors (A and B) who are interviewing a prospective undergraduate (C), and who, after learning that she does not know enough English Literature (the programme she wants to start) to meet the requirements for admission, are vague and generalise in order to implicate that she does not know anything:

[9]

a 20 2now we can't set up lecture courses and talk about /
a 20 2simple history or indeed even the simple history of /
a 20 2English literature we will compare a a play written /
a 20 2in the Restoration Period [0m] with something that /
a 20 2happened in Elizabethan times and we assume that /
a 20 2our students are knowing what we are talking about /
a 20 2you *see* /
B 11 2*and* we ^\also ass/ume# /
B 11 2that they ^kn\ow that# /
B 11 2^M\arlowe# /
B 11 2was ^writing be'fore !Sh\akespeare# - /
B 11 2not *^after*# /
a 20 2*before* you see very impor**tant** /
B 11 2**^y\es*** /
A 11 2^w\ell# . /
A 11 2I ^know it's a . !dr\awback# /
A 11 2^but in 'fact I !h\aven't 'been# - /
A 11 2^r\eadin g m/uch# . /

(LLC, S.3.1.)

By saying "our students" and "they", the professors are overgeneralising and being vague: they do not specify whether she is included in that group or not, so as not to be rude and tell her directly that she has no idea of what she is talking about. She certainly "catches" the message, for she readily admits that she has not been reading much, which shows the success of the ironical effect intended by the professors.

It is also possible to ironically "displace H" (strategy n° 14). Brown & Levinson describe this strategy as one in which the speaker goes off record as to who the target of his/her FTA is, or he may pretend to address the FTA to someone whom it would not threaten, and hope that the real target will see that the FTA is aimed at him/her. This seems to be the case in the following scene from *The Golden Girls*, where Blanche, Dorothy and Rose are in a demonstration, and Dorothy criticises

Rose's speech in an ironical way. They do not speak directly to Rose, though she can hear them:

[10] Rose: (into megaphone) All creatures must learn to coexist. Back where I come from, they do. That's why the brown bear and the field mouse can share their lives and live in harmony. 'course, they can't mate or the mice would explode. You know what I mean,

Dorothy (to Blanche): I think Rose needs to work on her metaphors.

(GG, 1991: 95)

Dorothy is indirectly saying that Rose's metaphor was awful. She uses the hedge "I think" and minimises or softens the criticism by saying that "she has to work on her metaphors" when, in fact, what she means is that, once more, Rose is showing signs of having low intellectual capacities.

The last off record strategy in the chart, "Be incomplete, use ellipsis", may also be mixed with irony. Sometimes a speaker may be incomplete by placing strategical silence or pauses in his discourse and thus leave the ironic implicature "hanging in the air". For instance, I have observed that, in American English, it has become a "cliché" to say:

"With friends like this, who needs enemies?"

whenever a friend has shown that s/he is not a good friend at all. Hence, sometimes the last part of the question is ellipted and the speaker is perceived as ironic without completing it ("With friends like this..."). Corpus examples of this strategy will be given and analysed in more detail in 6.3.4, where silence and pauses are viewed as possible prosodic features accompanying

irony.

In many cases, more than two of these off record strategies can work together, as can be seen from an analysis of many of the examples given. In the following passage, there is a combination of "irony", "overgeneralisation", "giving association clues" and "being vague or ambiguous":

[11] Sophia: I don't care if you're paying for dinner. What you want to do is crazy.

Martha: It's time to go, Sophia. I don't want to see another Monday. I don't want to wait and end up going like Lydia. I'm going to decide when it's over.

Sophia: I always thought somebody named God did that...

(GG, 1991: 113)

Sophia's final remark is an indirect criticism of Martha's decision to commit suicide. By overgeneralising, being vague and giving some association clues, she is avoiding the direct criticism which would perhaps be something like: "You are completely crazy for having such an irresponsible attitude".

Having shown the possibility of combination of all the off record strategies (in Brown & Levinson's chart) with irony, I now turn to the final issue in this chapter, namely, the influence of P, D and R (the sociological variables) upon both the choice to be ironic and -once this possibility has been chosen- the choice of the ironic substrategy.

5.5 Irony and the sociological variables P, D and R

Brown & Levinson argue that the assessment of the seriousness of an FTA involves the following factors:

- 1- The "social distance" (D) of S and H (a symmetric relation);
- 2- the relative "power" (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation);
- 3- the absolute "ranking" (R) of impositions in the particular culture.

(1987: 74)

If irony is a strategy used to do FTA's, it is logical to think that its use or non-use can be affected or influenced by these variables. The seriousness or weightiness of a particular FTA is compounded of both risk to S's face and risk to H's face, in a proportion relative to the nature of the FTA. The following formula is given by Brown & Levinson to calculate the weightiness of an FTA:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

where D is a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purposes of this act. P is an asymmetric social dimension of relative power, i.e., P(H, S) is the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plan and self-evaluation. R is a culturally and situationally defined ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with the agent's wants of self-determination or of approval (his negative and positive face wants). (1987: 76-7)

According to Brown & Levinson, going off record (and, consequently, also being ironic) is one of the least risky strategies: the more an act threatens S's or H's face, the more

S will want to choose a higher-numbered strategy, because these strategies afford payoffs of increasingly minimised risk. Then the explanation for irony within this framework would be (in the case of Negative Irony, for this is the only type they take into account) that, given that the speaker/writer wants to criticise somebody or something, he chooses to do it in an off record way by virtue of the fact that this strategy offers more security and less risk of face loss. I have observed, however, in the corpus as well as in my everyday experience, that many times hearers can be offended by ironical remarks, giving evidence that this rule does not always work. There may be persons or even whole cultures that consider being indirect and ironic a ruder behaviour (and, therefore, a more threatening one) than simply going baldly on record (indeed, in our Western culture, sometimes it is considered more valuable to be "frank" or "open" than to be indirect and obscure).

Nor does this rule seem to work for cases of Positive Irony, for, why should a person choose the strategy of criticism to convey praise when it is more risky to do so? (It seems, indeed, to be more risky, since, given its off record quality it could be open to misinterpretation and ambiguity, and then someone could interpret it literally (as a criticism instead of praise). This, I believe, can partially be explained by the thesis put forward above, that off record and on record strategies can combine in order to create more intricate and subtler strategies that convey equally intricate and subtle meanings such as those labelled as "ironic". It can also be

explained by means of the working and influence of the sociological variables P, D and R. The weaving net of variables does not seem to be simple, and, consequently, "general rules" like the one discussed here do not hold valid for some cases, and, therefore, they should be worked out in a more detailed and careful way.

I shall thus proceed to discuss each of the sociological variables, first separately, and then together, in relation to the corpora examples I am using for this investigation.

5.5.1 Distance

Diane Blakemore states that "by leaving his attitude implicit, the speaker/writer of an ironic utterance conveys a suggestion of complicity" (1992: 170). Sperber (1974) makes a similar statement. This idea would suggest that when a speaker chooses to be ironic, it is because s/he estimates that the distance between him/her and the hearer is relatively small (they are "accomplices"). But, in spite of what Sperber and later on Blakemore said, I have noticed that it can also happen that verbal irony be chosen on occasions in which the factor of distance is higher, precisely because of the aforementioned risk-minimising payoffs. It looks like a paradox, then, that the ratios "the higher the distance, the higher the probability of using verbal irony as a strategy" and "the lower the distance, the higher the probability of using verbal irony as a strategy"

could both be true. But, in fact, these statements reflect the relativity and context-dependency of the phenomenon of irony. In some particular situations, one of the statements will be valid; in some others, the other one will be considered as valid, and this validity seems to depend on two main factors:

a) whether the irony is aimed at the hearer or at a third party (see Fig 1 in 5.3.3) and b) whether the irony is positive or negative. In the sarcastic irony found in *The Golden Girls*, for example, the distance value among the four women is rather low, considering the facts that they are all friends, they live in the same house, and, consequently the relationship among them is a very close one. Most of the irony used by the "girls" (and specially by Dorothy) is of the Negative kind: they have a great tendency towards making witty, pungent and criticising comments of one another. Most cases could then be labelled as "Negative irony directed to the hearer". This seems to confirm the hypothesis that "familiarity is more permissive" with verbal irony. The same but also the opposite (paradoxically and ironically) could be said of the *"Yes Minister"* series: on the one hand, we find bitter and frequent irony on the part of the Minister's wife (when addressing the Minister), which shows how common it may be among closely related people. But, on the other hand, we find equally bitter irony in Humphrey's comments (Humphrey is the Minister's Secretary) and, here, the D value is much higher than in the case of the wife. In the case of Humphrey, it could be said that he uses irony to minimise his face risk when criticising the Minister, something he would not

be allowed to do in a direct way.

As regards the examples taken from Bertrand Russell's argumentative prose, it is important to distinguish between a) the targets of his irony and b) the readers of his irony. The distance between him and his readers can be estimated as low, since his readers become his accomplices in criticising the targets of his irony (a third party that can be society, religion, the government, etc.). Then the distance between him and his targets appears to have a higher value. Consequently, the ratio adopted for these cases of verbal irony will vary, depending on whether we take into account his readers or the "victims" of his irony. I do not disregard the possibility of the readers and the victims being the same people in some particular cases, in which case the readers would not be Russell's accomplices and would feel attacked. But, in general, Russell uses the third person in his sarcastic comments, which at least gives the impression that his attack is not directed to the second person (the readers, in this case).

David Kaufer (1977) emphasises the importance of a reader's having knowledge of the author's beliefs as a requisite step in assessing whether a particular discourse is ironical or not. As an illustrating example, he quotes this passage from *Huckleberry Finn* (chapter 32), in which the implication of the last statement is that "niggers" are not people:

- Good Gracious! Anybody hurt?
- No'm. Killed a nigger.
- Well, it's lucky: because sometimes people do get hurt!

(1959: 216)

Kaufer thus argues that, if we assume that Mark Twain is a racist, then we have no reason to believe he is being ironic in having a character speak this way. But, if we assume that he is not a racist, we can explain this remark as Twain's way of attacking this character. In the case of Russell, something similar occurs, for it also seems logical to assert that it is easier to understand his sarcastic irony if one knows, for example, that he had liberal ideas and was an agnostic. The conclusion to this is, then, that the shorter the distance between speaker and hearer or writer and reader, the higher the probability of comprehension of the irony conveyed.

As regards the examples taken from the *London Lund Corpus* and those in the newspaper articles, I can not make generalisations in terms of D or any of the sociological variables, since, in the case of the LLC, they belong to different texts in which different contextual factors are found, and, in the case of the newspaper articles, they are different pieces of journalistic writing written by different authours about different topics. Consequently there are different values for the P,D and R variables in each particular case. I shall try to analyse these variables in the actual examples from the LLC and from the other sources used in this investigation in section 5.5.4, after discussing, in a general way, the other two sociological variables, namely, *Power* and *Ranking of imposition* of the particular culture.

5.5.2 Power

Considering now the P variable, it seems that a paradox takes place again: it can be logically supposed that a person in power could make great use of irony in order to bitterly criticise whatever or whoever s/he considers to deserve such criticism. This may be the case of Bertrand Russell's ironic attacks, for he was a person in power in the sense that he had moral and academic authority to be able to and to dare make such criticisms.

On the other hand, it could also be the case that a person uses irony in order to avoid on record criticism (and, therefore, avoid certain responsibility and face loss) of a superior or person in power, as seems to be the case with Humphrey's ironic discourse in the *"Yes, Minister"* series.

According to the results of four experiments conducted by Thomas Holtgraves (1994), the Power of the speaker influences even the comprehension of the hearer, for one of the conclusions of these experiments was that, when the speaker was higher in status than the hearer, the comprehension of indirect requests was quicker than when the interactants were equal in status. This could, perhaps, mean that persons in power are expected and allowed to use indirect strategies with people having a lower social or professional rank, and this could be one reason for people in power to be ironic.

Interestingly, the knowledge of the exact value of the P variable may make the hearer decide whether an utterance is

ironic or not. Lakoff (1972) notes that a superior may address an obvious inferior (e.g. in the army) by saying "Come in" with no sense of sarcasm. But if an officer addresses a private by saying: "Come in, won't you?", he is necessarily being sarcastic. Similarly, whereas the use of please prefacing an imperative is a "mark of politeness", its use by an Army officer to his privates would be interpretable as sarcastic (1972: 911).

Studies by Holmes (1984), Preisler (1986) and Smith Hefner (1988) demonstrate that greater politeness investment does not necessarily encode lack of power in conversational interaction. This could explain the fact that, sometimes, a person in power uses negative politeness strategies to be ironic, as has been shown in 5.3.

Harris (1995) argues that "truth" comes to be defined pragmatically as what is accepted explicitly as shared knowledge, and, in her study, she observed that powerful institutional members move from the "given" to the "new", which is often "disputable", by a variety of communicative strategies which the less powerful "clients" find difficult to challenge (1995: 117). This would mean that powerful people are to some extent entitled to change what is considered as "true" by the sole virtue of their authority and power, and it does not seem illogical for this to have consequences in their use of irony.

Johnson (1992) writes about the use of hedges with Positive Politeness with the purpose of diminishing the power of the speaker. Hedges like "I find", "I believe", etc., could be used to mitigate the claim to knowledge of the speaker, and, as

knowledge is an aspect of power, they could also mitigate his power. It would be interesting to investigate whether this can also happen when hedges are used in ironic utterances.

5.5.3 Ranking of imposition of the particular culture

The R variable may also affect the decision to choose irony as a strategy. For instance, there are certain situations in everyday life in which irony seems to be more accepted and expected than in others. One would not expect, for example, a fitness instructor to be ironic when giving instructions as to how to do the exercises. On the other hand, irony towards the opponent party is expected and enjoyed by people in general when listening to the politicians' speeches in their election campaigns.

As was noted in 3.3, Booth (1974) observes that irony seems to be used, at least in oral form, in all cultures, for he has been unable to find anyone from any land who could not think of examples from his own people, and he even notes that, in some cultures, some ironies are firmly built into the usual terms for things (e.g., as quoted in 3.3, in Western American, tall men are nicknamed "Shorty", or, in one part of India, a blind man is called "man with a thousand eyes") in which case we could speak of "conventionalised irony" (see 3.3).

I have already mentioned some cultures in which a kind of irony used with positive politeness is part of the ritual of some groups (e.g.: the "ritual insults" of black adolescents in

New York, the teasing relationships of some black tribes in Africa, or the "flyting" of joking relationships in some English dialects). In these cases, the R variable becomes of utter importance, since the same kind of language used in another culture or sub-culture, or with other people, would by no means be interpreted as ironic and could lead to catastrophic results.

As is the case with P and D, R is also decisive in many instances for the assessment or the labelling of a given utterance as "ironic". Blum Kulka (1990) writes about the notions of "sincerity" and "truthfulness" in the Chinese culture, and notes that, for instance, a Chinese hostess will claim "there is nothing to eat" even after laying ten different dishes before her guests (1990: 262). Here, actual truthfulness is waived in service of what Leech (1983) called "the principle of polite modesty". Hence, in this case, we could not label the hostess's utterance as ironic: her purpose is to be perceived by her guests as a modest person, and, consequently, an ironic interpretation seems to have very little sense here.

In the study mentioned above, Blum-Kulka concludes that culture interferes in the amount of direct and/or indirect politeness strategies people use in family discourse. This would imply that the frequency in the use of irony (an indirect, off record strategy) will also vary according to the culture. I do not intend to prove this hypothesis here, but it appears as a fertile area for further research.

The incidence of the D, P, and R variables upon the use of irony can be, in itself, a topic for a whole thesis or

dissertation. I do not intend it to be the main topic in this dissertation, but I shall try to introduce some research on the problem (that can be extended in future investigation) by means of the analysis of some of the corpus examples. I now turn to them.

5.5.4 D, P and R as viewed in some examples in the corpora

An example of a situation where the speaker has power over the hearer and uses irony to criticise her can be found in example [9] in the previous section (5.5.3), in which two professors are "attacking" a prospective student for not having the required knowledge to enter University as a graduate student. This example was presented as a case where the off record strategy of "overgeneralisation" is used together with irony. By saying: "we assume that our students are knowing what we are talking about, you see", the professor tries to mitigate the fact that, contrary to their assumptions, this student did not know what she was talking about. Evidently, his condition as professor gives him authority to say this, and so it can be concluded that he is ironic because he is powerful (if the student's interlocutor were another student, the probability of occurrence of this particular use of irony would be lower). But at the same time, these professors try to "mitigate" the criticism by overgeneralising and by using hedges like "we assume" which could be interpreted (as Johnson (1992) notes) as an intention on the part of the speakers not to be rude and, in

that way, diminish their power to a certain extent. In spite of this possibility, it still can be said that the P value is high for the speakers. The D value is also high, considering the fact that this is the first time they have met and that the relationship is that of professor-student. As regards R, it seems to me that, in our Western society, teachers are better allowed to criticise students face to face (both in an on record and in an off record way) than students are allowed to criticise teachers in the same overt manner. When a student and a teacher are face to face, it is more face threatening for the student to criticise the teacher than vice versa. It is different when the criticism is not made face to face, in which case it seems that students feel they can do it freely (e.g., when two students criticise an absent teacher).

The formula for this first example of irony in the section seems then to be the following:

$$[1] \quad hP (S,H) + hD + lR$$

where:

hP (S,H) = high power of the speakers (the professors) with respect to the hearer (the student);

hD = high distance among interlocutors;

lR = low ranking of imposition of the culture on the speaker, since his act is not highly face-threatening.

This example shows that the power variable affects the value of the R variable, for the ratio "the greater the power, the smaller the face threat of the speaker and, consequently, the R value" seems to work.

Consider now example 3 in section 5.3.2, in which A

uses positive irony by saying to B (who is a computer programmer) that Malcolm (the man at the computer unit) "could help B if he got stuck". Both A and B are academics who now work together in the same department. A is a woman aged 45 and B is a man aged 28. Neither of them seems to have power over the other, they are colleagues and are engaged in friendly conversation; therefore, A tries to show his friendliness at a particular moment by uttering a sentence whose presupposition is intended to be understood as ironic; i.e., "if you got stuck" presupposes that B might get stuck, but A wants to mean the opposite, for considering B is a computer programmer, it is very unlikely that he would get stuck or that he would need any help from anyone with computers. It is a way of telling B something like: "I know that you know a great deal about computers", with which she is addressing B's positive face. The D value is low, then, considering they are colleagues. A's utterance does not try to interfere with B's wants of self-determination or approval; on the contrary, A is making an expenditure of "goods", i.e., an expression of regard for B's positive face. The imposition of the culture can be said to be low, for -other things being equal- colleagues are generally expected to be in good terms with one another and, therefore, there is a general assumption about trying to keep each one's positive face, which, by way of praising, does not seem to be highly risky. The combination of the sociological variables for this particular example would therefore be:

[2] 1P (S-H) + 1D + 1R

where:

1P (S-H) = low power both of speaker and hearer over each other

1D = low distance between interlocutors

1R = low ranking of imposition of the culture on the speaker to do the FTA.

This example shows that Positive Irony can be used in contexts in which the values of the three sociological variables are low, a fact that seems logical for friendly relationships, for in these cases the interlocutors are expected to have equal status, and consequently it is not frequent to find great differences as regards power or distance, and, considering the degree of confidence and trust between them, it is also logical to suppose that there will be fewer opportunities in which any of the interlocutors finds himself doing a highly risky FTA.

Consider now one of the typical ironic passages by Bertrand Russell:

[3] <<... I am sometimes shocked by the blasphemies of those who think themselves pious -for instance, the nuns who never take a bath without wearing a bathrobe all the time. When asked why, since no man can see them, they reply: "Oh, but you forget the good God". Apparently they conceive of the Deity as a Peeping Tom, whose omnipotence enables Him to see through bathroom walls, but who is foiled by bathrobes. This view strikes me as curious.>>
(BR, 1958: 38)

Since Bertrand Russell was not religious, it can be said that the D value measuring the distance between him and the "victims" of his irony (religious people) is high. But, as was explained in 5.3, the ironic speaker may be criticising (or praising) a given person, who is different from the addressee, in which case the

values of the sociological variables should be estimated for both relationships. In this particular instance, if we consider that Russell's addressees (his readers) are "his accomplices" and not his victims, then the D between him and his readers has a low value, whereas that between him and his victims is high.

As regards the P variable, Russell here can be considered as more powerful than both his readers and his victims. He has the power of knowledge, of being a prestigious mathematician, thinker and philosopher, and, as such, he can write a book, express his ideas and influence many people with them.

With respect to the R value, it seems reasonable to think that it was rather risky to dare criticise the church and religion at the time he was writing his works (early 20th century), for religion also had great power, and it was not easy to attack it in such a way. Then, the ranking of imposition of the culture at that time could be considered high if we take into account the risks a person was running when daring criticise such an institution as the church. Therefore, the combination of variables for this particular instance (and for many of the Russell examples) is:

$$[3] \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{hD (V)} \\ \text{LD (R)} \end{array} + \text{hP} + \text{hR}$$

where:

hD (V) = high distance between ironist and victims of irony
 LD (R) = low distance between ironist and readers
 hP = high power of writer/ironist
 hR = high ranking of imposition of the culture upon not doing the
 FTA

In the following example from *The Golden Girls*, Sophia uses her authority as the oldest of the "girls" to be sarcastic towards Blanche. As has been noted in some of the examples discussed in this work, Blanche has a reputation for having ample experience with men, and, therefore, she's being constantly attacked by her roommates, especially by Dorothy and Sophia:

[4] Blanche: Rose, what were you doing out so early this morning?

Rose: Well, I couldn't sleep, so I went for a spin last night -to Alabama. Blanche, do you know at a truck stop in Tuscaloosa they have an egg dish named after you?

Blanche: Really? How are they prepared?

Sophia: Over easy.

(GG, 1991: 205)

Sophia uses here the strategy of "giving association clues" in order to be ironic and implicate that Blanche is "easy with men". Sophia has a certain power over the girls by virtue of being the oldest of the four, and so her bitter criticisms are generally expected and accepted, no matter how much the other girls like them or not. The D value is here quite low, considering the fact that the girls are friends and live in the same house, as a family. The P variable seems, again, to influence the R value, since the fact of being more powerful (in age and experience) appears to make the act less threatening, i.e. our society is more permissive with old people and their opinions are generally respected (albeit not always shared). The combination is thus:

[4] hP (S,H) + 1D + 1R

where:

hP (S,H) = high power of speaker with respect to hearer/s

lD = low distance value among speakers

lR = low ranking of imposition of the culture as to doing or not doing the FTA.

It is interesting to note here that the two characters of the series that use irony with greater frequency are the two characters that have more power in a certain respect. As has been said, Sophia has the power of experience and old age. Dorothy (the other ironist of the series) has the power of knowledge and education. Dorothy is the most educated of the four girls; she is a high school teacher, and the three other girls look up to her as the most intelligent in the group. She, therefore, feels entitled to make pungent criticisms that many times give evidence of the other girls' ignorance or lack of cleverness in many respects, and, indeed, this is one of the most common effects of verbal irony: the ironist is seen as a witty, intelligent human being that mocks at other not-so-intelligent human beings.

Finally, I shall analyse one more example from the "Yes, Minister" video episodes. We have already seen that the Minister's wife makes use of sarcasm or irony in general to show her disagreement or discontent with some of her husband's attitudes after having become the Minister of Administrative Affairs. One instance is the following:

- [5] Hacker: You're very tense.
wife: Oh, No! I'm not tense. I'm just a politician's wife.
I'm not likely to have feelings. A happy, carefree,
politician's wife.
(YM, 1994 Video episode: "Open Government")

Evidently, the wife has power over the Minister simply because she is his wife, and, consequently, she can use as much Negative Irony as she wants in order to criticise and influence him with her feelings and thoughts. The D value is, on the contrary, very low, given the kind of relationship (wedlock) between both interlocutors. The R value also appears to be low, for being ironic towards one's husband does not seem to be extremely face threatening in our culture; in fact, many times irony is used among couples or families as a game and as a way of not using more direct language that in some situations would be more insulting. I am conscious of the fact that generalisations cannot be made here, though my explanation seems to serve the purposes of this example and of other possible ones.

The combination of variables for this case would then be:

$$[5] \quad hP(S,H) + 1D + 1R$$

where:

$hP(S,H)$ = high power of speaker over hearer (in the sense that she can affect and influence her husband)

$1D$ = low distance between interlocutors

$1R$ = low ranking of imposition of the culture (since the FTA involved is not highly risky).

5.5.5 Conclusions to section 5.5

After the analysis made of the possible value of the three sociological variables in relation to some examples in the

corpora, the context-dependency of their value seems evident. That is, no single formula or combination of the variables seems to be the formula for cases of ironic FTA's. In some contexts, the P and D values may be high and the R value low, or the P low and the D and R high, etc.. It nevertheless seems that, in cases of Negative Irony, there is a tendency for the P value of the speaker to be high, but this is only an intuition; more research should be done on the topic to be able to make generalisations. A statistical analysis of the most frequent combinations should be done in order to reach more valid conclusions as to the tendencies of ironic FTA's in this respect.

In addition, the possibility of existence of other sociological variables could be looked into, as well as the existence of other dependent variables or sub-variables of the main ones. It seems to me that, for instance, the ranking of imposition of a given culture over an FTA may be valued differently by different people (even within the same culture), or that different people perceive power and distance in a different manner, depending on, for instance, their personal background or family history (which would then be considered sub-variables).

Brown & Levinson's formula estimating the weightiness of an FTA, thus, does not seem easy to handle, for the values of the variables may vary even within the same situation and the same FTA, depending on whether we consider the speaker's power over the hearer or over a third party, the distance as seen by the speaker or as seen by the hearer, and the R value as seen

from the kind of imposition made upon the hearer or upon the speaker , and, eventually, on how each of them regards this imposition. In cases of irony in particular, all these details seem to be of utmost importance, for, as has been shown throughout this work, both speakers and hearers (and audiences or third parties, if there are any) need to understand an intricate and complex network of psychological, sociological and linguistic relationships that make it possible and "logical" to reach an ironic interpretation of the utterance or act in question. The combination of variables and the estimation of the weightiness of the FTA may well be of a more complex nature than the formula proposed by Brown & Levinson, although it has to be acknowledged that this formula captures the important fact that all three dimensions -P, D and R- contribute to the determination of the level of politeness with which an FTA is communicated.

In any case, the analysis of the examples in this section has shown that, in general terms, it can be stated that the sociological variables P, D and R influence the use of verbal irony , as hypothesis n° 10 expresses. Although no quantitative analysis is made here, I have tried to show how these variables work independently but together, in order to provide the ironic FTA with subtle shades of meaning which are crucial for its correct comprehension.

5.6 General conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter, I have presented the phenomenon of

verbal irony within the framework of Politeness Theory. Although it can be said that this theory is a suitable one to analyse and view ironic language acts, it can also be said that irony is a much more complex phenomenon than it is shown to be by Brown & Levinson in their Theory of Politeness. I have tried to demonstrate that:

- a) An ironic speaker/writer can not only violate the Maxim of Quality (as Brown and Levinson claim) but also the other three Gricean Maxims (Quantity, Manner and Relevance) (Research Hypothesis n°7);
- b) an ironic speaker/writer not only makes use of off record strategies but also of on record ones (hypothesis n° 8). In cases of "conventionalised" and "implicature-free" (see 7.2.2) irony, the ironic FTA is completely on record;
- c) both Positive and Negative Politeness can be used in combination with irony, a fact that supports my claim for the existence of a negative and a positive kind of irony (Research Hypothesis n° 8);
- d) all the off record strategies presented by Brown and Levinson (1987) can be used to convey ironic meanings and very frequently two or more of them can co-occur to result in an ironic whole (Research Hypothesis n° 9);
- e) the sociological variables P, D and R are "handled" by ironic speakers/writers and "weighed" by the possible hearers so as to assess the existence or non-existence of verbal irony and the possible shades of meaning within the irony if it takes place. This aspect, however, is not scrutinised here, and,

as was anticipated, more research should be done in the future as to the most frequent possible formulas of weightiness of the ironic FTA, or as to other variables or sub-variables possibly intervening in the total weightiness as well.

All these conclusions have been reached after analysing several examples in the corpora used for this investigation.

The concept of *strategy* used by Brown & Levinson is, in my opinion, a very useful and descriptive one to understand the phenomenon in question. For that reason, I have considered the Theory of Politeness as fertile ground where verbal irony can be better comprehended and meditated upon. I believe that all cases of irony can be structured and classified around the concept of strategy, and that is what I shall try to show in the taxonomy of ironic strategies proposed in chapter 8.

After having studied and discussed this theory, as well as other theories of verbal irony in previous chapters, I thought it would be necessary to clarify the role of certain prosodic features that are generally associated with irony (e.g., ironic intonation or "tone of voice") in order to be able to give them their precise importance and place in the totality of ironic strategies and in the total ironic meaning. I shall, thus, turn to them in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: *INTONATION AND OTHER PROSODIC FEATURES*
IN IRONIC DISCOURSE: A SURVEY

<<Pity the poor analyst, who has to do the best he can with meanings that are as elusive as a piece of wet soap in a bath tub.>>

Dwight Bolinger, *Aspects of Language*

<<Virginia: That was a lovely lunch, Blanche, a lovely lunch, in a lovely house with your lovely friends.

Blanche: Stop making fun of me Virginia

Virginia: Making fun of you... Honey, I was complementing you.

Blanche: I heard the way you said "lovely".

Virginia: How did I say "lovely"?

Blanche: Oh, you know very well how you said "lovely". You said "lovely" the same way you say "lovely" to a date who's just shown up in a light blue tuxedo.>>

The Golden Girls: Scripts

6.1 Aims of the chapter

In this chapter, I present a study of intonation and other prosodic features as they occur in ironic discourse, with the aim of investigating in what way they are related to the phenomenon of irony. In other words, the focus is on how and when the speakers make use of these features as a tool or strategy to convey ironic meanings.

As it seems evident that there exists what many people refer to as "an ironic tone of voice", my secondary research

questions for this part of the study of irony are the following:

- 1) Is there any specific kind of intonation for ironic utterances in English?, or, Is there a special tone used invariably when they occur?
- 2) Is there any other kind of prosodic feature which may serve to signal or mark ironic utterances?

In order to answer these questions, I made use of the two kinds of research that D. Brown (1988) considers. First, a review of the existing literature on the topic was made, which I shall discuss and which will serve as a basis for the clarification and understanding of the problem. This would constitute what Brown calls "secondary research". But at the same time, some "primary research" was done, i.e. "a study derived from the primary source of information", which in this case is the English language. To this latter purpose, I restricted my analysis in this chapter only to the *London Lund Corpus* (LLC) because, in that corpus, intonation and other prosodic features are marked (whereas in the other corpora they are not). Since the texts analysed from this corpus and the examples of irony found in those texts are numerous, they seem to be enough for this part of my study. The intonation and prosodic features of the video programmes can also be observed, but considering that the examples in the LLC are numerous, I thought it would not be necessary to make a prosodic transcription of such programmes. As for the written source of my corpus (Bertrand Russell's prose and the newspaper articles), there was, naturally, no way of making such a transcription, though some interesting comments can and shall be made as to the prosodic interpretation on the part of their possible readers (see 6.5).

The hypothesis that I have derived from the research questions is the following (which was anticipated in the Introduction as Research Hypothesis n° 11):

<<There is no specific tone used exclusively for ironic utterances. Nevertheless, the frequency of occurrence of the different tones within ironic discourse is different from the frequency of use of these tones in non-ironic discourse. Intonation and other prosodic features (such as pitch level, laughter, etc.) work together to conform the so-called "ironic tone of voice" and the use of these features constitutes only one more of the possible strategies ironic speakers have at their disposal.>>

The texts analysed are those specified and described in the Introduction (see 1.4.1, 1)). Each of these texts is of considerable length, and although irony, being a pragmatic phenomenon, is not so easy to find as, for instance, a syntactic category, eighty six (86) occurrences of ironic utterances were identified.

An account of the different cases of irony in relation to the topics that concern us in this chapter will be made, where 86 occurrences will be equivalent to 100% of occurrences.

The objective of this survey is, then, to try to determine the degree to which a particular intonation or any other kind of prosodic prominence accompanies ironic utterances or affects their possible interpretation.

For the clear understanding of the problem studied here, it is important to bear in mind that prosodic features include not only tone-units (length, distribution and structure), tone choice, pitch, range, prominence/stress, loudness, rate, rhythmicality, pause and tension (see Crystal and Davy, 1969) but also silence and voice qualifications such as

sobs, laughter and giggles or cough, as Johns-Lewis (1986) remarks. The function of prosody seems to be primarily concerned with the semantics or pragmatics of the utterance, and therefore the speakers' conceptions of the functions of prosody seem to be in considerable accord with psycholinguistic reality. Indeed, Cutler (1983) comes to these conclusions after analysing prosodic repairs in a great number of recorded examples: she observed that prosodic repairs were issued when the speaker feared the hearer might be misled into an inappropriate interpretation of the utterance. Anomalous accent placement itself, as long as it did not carry unwanted pragmatic implications, was not corrected (1983: 91).

The opening move for this analysis will be to discuss what the researchers have found out about the different prosodic features in connection with irony and to try to check this knowledge with the data in the corpus.

6.2 Intonation

Many authors have studied the intonation of ironic utterances to try to find out whether a particular intonation is characteristic of irony and whether it is a necessary condition to it.

Phoneticians such as Kenneth Pike (1945) in America and Roger Kingdom in England (1958) claimed that tones had a semantic function in language. When J.D. O'Connor and G.F. Arnold wrote *Intonation of Colloquial English* (1969), it was already a well-

known fact among linguists that intonation was significant and much importance started to be given to intonation contours of utterances. Among the variety of meanings given to an utterance by using different tones, Kingdom, in *The Groundwork of English Intonation*, points out that "implicatory statements" require a Tone III (falling-rising). Kingdom defines "implicatory statements" as "statements in which the speaker intends his hearer to understand something more than the words themselves convey" (1958: 222). Irony would obviously fall within this category. Also Leech, in his *Principles of Pragmatics*, makes reference to the fall-rise tone as "an intonation often associated with indirect implicature". In effect, the rate of occurrence of this tone among ironic utterances can be said to be high (as will be shown in the results of this survey), though not exclusive of ironic discourse. For the sake of illustration, consider the following examples from the LLC, in which the falling-rising tone seems to be of high importance in the interpretation of the ironic remark: In both "chunks" of dialogue two academics (one female and the other male) are criticising their Head of Department's views on Literature and how it should be taught:

[1]

```

A    11  but ^n\o#
A    11  ^you s\ee '[@:m]# .
A    11  [@] ^n\o#
A    12  ^this is ^this is the :l\ine#
A    11  to ^((s\ell))#
A    11  ^\obviously# **~
A    11  - . ^and he 'thinks that !\I kn/ow#
A    11  [??] ^I'm . "I too 'much con:cerned
      with :w\ords# - .

```

A 11 ^I'm lweak on aes:th\etic as he p/uts
it# (- - . giggles) which ^seems
to m/e# .
A 11 ^quite 'quite l\ooney#
A 11 I ^mean *the lfact* that 'you 'you -
:st\udy a 'thing#
A 11 ^d\oesn't mean to s/ay#
A 11 you ^can't also !lf\eel it#
B 11 *^[=m]## .
A 11 ^d\oes it# .
B 11 ^[\m]# .
A 11 ^b\ut#
A 11 ^\anyway#
A 11 ^this is _his !l\ine#
A 11 and ^he's st\icking 'to it#
A 11 at the ^m\oment#
A 11 ^till he 'changes 'next :y\ear#
A 21 *(- laughs)*
B 20 *(- laughs)*
A 11 ^which I :gather is 'quite _
p\ossible#
A 12 I ^th\ink 'we you ^kn\ow [:@m]#
A 11 ^we 'have "f\ashions#

(LLC, S.1.6)

[2]

B 11 *((but . ^that !is only :n\atural#))*
A 11 a ^ra*ther 'weak ch\aracter#
A 11 ^d\oesn't it#
B 11 ^m\ay'be#
B 20 *((untranscribable murmur))*
A 11 *^not 'quite b\ig e'nough#
A 11 to ^go* and 'say l\ook old 'chap#
A 11 ^y\ou were r\ight# -
A 11 or per^haps not _even _big e_nough _to .
A 11 r\ecog'nize#
B 11 I ^got the im:pr\ession#
B 11 that he ^didn't !r\ecog'nize it# .
A 11 ^n\o#
A 11 *^pr\obably##
B 12 *^that '[@:]([m]))* - he ^just dilg\ested the
B 12 'id/eas#
B 11 and ^then _came _out with _them _quite
B 11 spont_aneously and without re!fl\ection#
B 21 *((but it's a)) ^bit*
A 11 *^[\m]##
B 11 d\ifficult#
B 11 in a ^w\ay# -
B 11 that a ^person could be "!s\o unre"fl/ective#
B 11 as ^not to _r\ealize#
B 11 that he'd ^ch\anged his m/ind# (laughs)

(LLC, S.1.6)

Both chunks of the same dialogue present various combinations of falling and rising tones, which help identify the whole insinuating and criticising tone of the dialogue. In the first chunk, one of the key utterances is "till he changes next year", which is placed as an afterthought or after comment to "this is his line, and he's sticking to it at the moment". The fall-rise on "year" helps to stress the contrast between what the Head of Department says now (i.e. the ideas he now sticks to) and what he will think or say next year. The whole ironic insinuation is that the Head of Department has a changing mind, and, consequently, he is unstable and one cannot trust him very much. In the second chunk, the speakers continue with their criticism of the Head of Department's weak character and B is mildly ironic in his last remark ("but its a bit difficult..."). Here combinations of "rise-fall" and "fall-rise" can be observed, as well as what Kingdom (1958) called "Divided tone III" (labelled "Fall+Rise" in the LLC) in "so unreflective", with the falling part of the tone on "so" and the rising part on the second syllable of "reflective"; and in "changed his mind", with the falling part on "changed" and the rising part on "mind". Again it can be said that the falling-rising tones let the hearer understand the ironic and criticising tone of the comment. But in both examples, other prosodic features are of considerable importance, such as the laughter, the "boosting" (i.e., an increase of the pitch level), the pauses and the arrangement of tone groups -and consequently of information groups (see Halliday, 1985)-. These other features will also be taken into

account throughout this chapter.

In spite of the relatively high frequency with which the fall-rise can be encountered in the ironic utterances of the LLC (as will be shown in numbers in the result session of this chapter), it can not be said that all the cases included this tone. The following examples confirm this statement:

- [3] B 11 ^G/\od _((damnation))# .
 B 11 I'll ^cr\own that _bastard#
 B 11 *((be^fore I'm f\inished with him# -
 B 11 it ^used to be)) the "ls\ame (with the*
 ^ b/\oard#)#/
 B 11 as ^w/\ell# .
 A 11 *((- laughs) . ((^oh n\o#
 A 11 I could ^see you sort of ls\eething#))*
 A 11 ^wh/at#
 B 11 the ^same at the b/\oard _meetings#
 B 11 *^t/\oo you* _know#
 B 21 I mean he ^takes over
 A 11 *((^y\es#))*
 B 11 *the :whole bloody ((!th=ing#))*
 A 13 *^he ^he ^he is* :really 'God al:m\ighty#
 A 11 he ^knows \everything# - -
 B 11 ((if)) ^I ldon't cr\own ((the)) b/astard#
 A 11 (- laughs) -

(LLC, S.1.1)

In his final comment, A uses an ironic metaphor ("God Almighty") with a falling tone on it. A is being ironic, for he evidently does not approve of this teacher's behaviour (he previously referred to him as a bastard). Even though, according to Halliday (1985), the use of the straightforward falling tone constitutes the "unmarked" use for statements, this tone occurs very frequently within ironic utterances (see 6.4). But in this example there are other clues, namely, other prosodic features, such as laughter, the prominence given by the heavy stress on the

metaphor and other clues of the content of discourse and the context that allow for the ironic interpretation.

In other examples, the tone used is simply a rise or a combination of rise and then fall (Rise+Fall), as in the following part of a conversation between academics in which A is trying to show his scepticism as to the background of a certain teacher:

[4]

A 13 2^this ^this ^this !str\uck me#
A 11 2as a ^kind of {/\odd} !t\itle#;*.;
A 11 2^you s/ee##* .
A 21 2[@]
B 11 2*^[\m]# -
B 11 2^[\m]##*
A 11 2^recognized :teacher *in ap:plied lingu\istics##*
B 11 2*^[\m]# .
B 11 2^[\m]##*
A 11 2- [@] . ^you kn/ow#
A 11 2((with ap^plied in br/ackets#)) -
A 12 2[^@:m] . ^and [@m] - :they said well :should he be
A 12 2[@m @] :recognized as a teacher of
A 12 2lin"!gu\istics# -
A 11 2^so !I said :w\ell#
A 11 2you know I ^don't know very much about what he
A 11 2"!d/\oes# *.*
A 11 2^in NF/O#
A 21 2but I ^have no reason to
B 11 2*((^[\m]#))*
A 11 2bel/ieve#
A 11 2that he ^teaches lin!!gu\istics# .

(LLC, S.1.2)

In fact, A is very sceptical about the title of "teacher in Applied Linguistics", and he does not believe that the teacher in question is good or that he should be recognised as a teacher of linguistics. This can also be inferred by the rising tone A places on the word "believe" and the emphasis he puts on "linguistics" with a falling tone.

Several combinations of tones have been observed in the corpus examples. The quantification and number of occurrences of the tones, as well as their combinations with other prosodic features, will be given in section 6.4 of this chapter. I shall now continue with the discussion and literary review.

Ann Cutler (1974) underlines the importance of the intonation contours of utterances such as:

"Harry's a real genius."

to determine whether the speaker really admires Harry or thinks quite the opposite, i.e. that Harry is anything but a genius. Nevertheless, she also states that if the cues from the context are strong enough, no intonational cues are necessary at all. For instance, if two people walk into an empty bar and one of them says:

"Sure is lively here tonight!"

the utterance will be understood as ironic regardless of the intonation used (1974: 117). This seems to be a quite reasonable argument, but, what would not seem so reasonable is to suggest that the same holds for other prosodic features. What I mean is that, as we shall see later on, when intonation is not crucial, there seem to be other prosodic features that are related to irony, i.e. features the speaker makes use of in order to convey his meaning. Anne Cutler herself writes about "other features" that may serve to identify sentences spoken ironically, which are: a) nasalisation, b) slowed rate of speaking, or c) exaggerated stress applied to one of the words (1974: 117). She

also comments that, in certain dialects of English, it is possible to achieve the same effects intonation achieves by appending the words "I don't think" (with heavy stress on "don't") to a sentence uttered with ironic intent, in which case additional intonational cues are optional (1974: 117). An example could be:

"John's really handsome, I 'don't think."

In a later paper Cutler claims that the effect exercised by the intonation contour of an utterance is dependent upon the context in which the utterance occurs (1977:110), which reconfirms her previous ideas, for she explains that in the sentence:

"Looks like a really popular place"

the propositional content is negated (and therefore the utterance understood as ironic) if the speaker and audience are in the process of entering a restaurant otherwise devoid of customers, in which case the clue for ironic interpretation would be the context and not the intonation of the utterance. In effect, both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts have proved to be of major importance for irony interpretation, considering it is a pragmatic phenomenon, but this does not mean that context excludes intonation or other prosodic features. In the examples analysed in the corpus, context and prosodic features seem to be parts of the whole and work together, rather than exclude each other.

6.2.1 Tonicity and tone

Halliday (1967) treated intonation as a part of English

grammar, and, in doing so, he was the first to integrate it in the language as a whole. When analysing tone, Halliday notes that "the English tone system is based on an opposition between falling and rising pitch, in which falling pitch conveys certainty and rising pitch uncertainty" (1985: 281). The falling-rising tone (Tone 4 for Halliday), is, according to his view, associated with reservations and conditions, having a general sense of "there's a 'but' about it". Tone contrasts relate to the "participants" in the discourse, for they represent their attitudes to and expectations of one another on the one hand, and their assessment of what is being said on the other hand (El Menoufy, 1988).

But Halliday does not think that tone is "all there is" in the realm of intonation. He gives much importance to the heavy semantic load carried by rhythm and intonation, and he distinguishes tonicity from tone (1967, 1985). Tonicity refers to the division of utterances into tone groups that in turn serve to organise discourse into *information units*. Each information unit is organised as a pitch contour, or tone, which may be falling, rising or mixed (falling-rising or rising-falling).

The information unit is made up of two functions: *Given* and *New*, which bear a close semantic relationship to Theme-Rheme structures. According to Halliday "other things being equal, a speaker will choose the theme from within what is given and locate the focus, the climax of the New, somewhere within the Rheme" (1985: 278). But although Given+New and Theme+Rheme are related, they are not the same thing (see Halliday (1985) for

clarification), but both are speaker selected, and it is the speaker who maps one structure on to the other to relate his discourse to the context or environment.

The important point about tone groups and their information units of Given+New used in combination with thematic information is -for the purposes of this study- to show how this combination may be exploited by the speaker to produce different rhetorical effects (as being ironic, for instance). Halliday explains that the speaker can "play" with the system, and a very frequent type of linguistic game playing is "the use of the two systems to achieve complex manoeuvres of putting the other down, making him feel guilty and the like" (1985: 279). Interestingly, the example Halliday gives to illustrate this point is one which he classifies as "mildly ironic":

<<speaker1: Are you coming back into circulation?

speaker2: I didn't know I was out.

speaker1: I haven't seen you for ages.>>

(1985: 279)

Halliday explains that speaker2 recognises an attack and defends himself with mild irony. The graphic representation of how the two systems (Given/New and Theme/Rheme) work together to that effect is the following:

I	didn't know	I was	out
THEME	RHEME		
THEME		RHEME	
GIVEN			NEW

(1) Theme: "from my angle", with "I didn't know as interpersonal metaphor for "in my estimation" plus negative

(2) Information: New: = contrastive out (contrasting with back) and extending back over everything except perhaps the initial I; "as I see it; I was not away, so you're wrong" (1985: 279).

This treatment of an ironic utterance opens up a wider spectrum for the analysis of "ironic intonation": it is not only the tones what we should take into account, but also the tonicity of the whole utterance and how it combines with other systems or structures. In the example given by Halliday the interaction Given+New / Theme+Rheme is very neat and clear, but I cannot say the same of the examples of irony in the LLC. In most of the cases, the irony extends to more than one information group and thus the correspondences cannot be so clearly marked, and the combinations and networks seem to be more complex, which does not mean that there is no "play" on the part of the speaker. On the contrary, the impression is that the speaker plays "too much" with these systems and in much more complex and intricate ways than Halliday's example shows. Perhaps one of the neatest examples I have found in the corpus is the following, in which the speaker is being ironic in the traditional way (and consequently, it is easy to identify the ironic proposition) by referring to a person as "dear Damian":

[1]

B 1212^I en_joyed . I ^still relm\ember#
 B 1112^that !{f\irst 'arts 'thing I did) l\ast 'year#
 A 1112it was ^[dhi: ?@m ?@m] the :K\enwood 'one#
 A 1112^w\asn't it#
 B 1112^n\o#
 B 1112it was the ^one bef\ore 'that#
 B 1112I ^think 'Robert pro'duced {\one) be:fore 'you
 B 1112c\ame#
 B 1112*it ^was the !one of [@m] . !M\atjev#*

A 1112*^ah y\es#;- -*;
A 1112"^oh y\es# .
A 1112^y\es#
A 1112+^y\es#+
A 1112**^y\es#**
B 1112and ^I "!!\oved 'that#
B 1112and +^every+body _else was being so !st\upid a'bout/
B 1112it#
B 1112**in^cluding** a'gain :dear 'Dan :D\amian#
B 2012[@m] *. (- giggles)
A 1112*^y/es#

(LLC, S.9.1)

In the sentence marked in bold type in the dialogue, the two structures, Given/New and Theme/Rheme, are strategically used in combination: In fact there are two information groups in it, and the ironic load is carried by the second tone group, which is like an after-comment or afterthought (irony is many times strategically used in afterthoughts). In spite of the existence of these two tone groups, it can be said that they are working together, and that the nucleus of the information group is found in the last falling tone on "Damian". The graphic representation would be something like the following, which shows how the two structures (Given/New - Theme/Rheme) are used in combination to attain the ironic effect:

/Everybody else was being so stupid about it/including dear Dan Damian

THEME	RHEME	
GIVEN	NEW	NEW
GIVEN	NEW	

The speaker has chosen "everybody else" as the Theme, i.e.: "I'm

going to say something about everybody else", and the new information he wants to give, which coincides with the Rheme, is that all these people were stupid, and what is more, that Damian was included among these stupid people. As all these people were stupid, the hearer (A) will understand that the speaker is being ironic when saying "dear". This is also part of the new information the speaker wants to convey.

Although this combination of tonicity with Theme/Rheme structures seems to be an interesting and revealing one, I shall not include its occurrences in the quantification done in 6.4, the reason being the aforementioned complexity of combinations. In addition, this work does not aim at making a thorough analysis of tonicity and/or Theme/Rheme structures. The main aim is the study of irony within a pragmatic framework, namely, the pragmatic strategies and discourse functions that speakers and listeners have at their disposal to produce and understand it. The use of prosodic features is but one more of the strategies, and, in this chapter, the intention is to make an account of some of these features (those that seem to be most prominent and important).

As a final issue within the framework of "ironic intonation", I consider it timely and appropriate to comment on Gibbs and O'Brien's findings of some psycholinguistic experimental research on irony understanding. These investigators point to the fact that "the irony of irony is that we can often recognise ironic situations and language even though we have a terrible time trying to define irony" (1991:523). As

one of the five main concluding points of their review of psycholinguistic evidence, they state that "people can easily understand sarcasm without any special intonational cues" (1991: 530). They are probably right if we think only of intonation, for, as we have seen (and the quantified data will confirm) there is not only one tone or special kind of intonation for all cases of irony. But there are other prosodic features which co-participate with intonation in most cases. Anne Cutler (1977) also notes that the primary mode in which such emotions as anger or fear are conveyed is voice *quality* rather than intonation. El-Menoufy (a disciple of Halliday's) remarks that the meaning of tone seems to be still a controversial subject, and adds that the selection of tone interacts with other intonational and non-intonational selections to produce the total meaning of utterances in discourse (1988: 4).

What seems to be essential to ironic interpretation, thus, is the existence of some prosodic features, though not necessarily all working together. To give a few examples, in a given utterance, the most prominent and important one may be intonation; in another, it may be the use of a high pitch on some key words; in another, it may be the laughter of the participants.

I shall thus proceed to discuss some of the prosodic features -other than intonation- that have proved to be present and outstanding in the ironic examples analysed in the LLC.

6.3 Other prosodic features

Catherine Johns-Lewis (1986) exposes the difficulties there are in defining prosody and in distinguishing intonation from other prosodic features. Crystal (1969) views intonation as:

<a complex of features from different prosodic systems... the most central (of which) are tone, pitch range and loudness, with rhythmicity and tempo closely related.>

(1969: 195)

But prosodic systems -for Crystal- not only include the above, but also pause and tension, voice qualifiers (i.e.: whispery, breathy, husky) and voice qualifications (i.e.: sob, laughter, giggle, cough). A definition of intonation like Crystal's presents a greater overlap with prosody than a narrow definition such as Gimson's, involving "rises and falls in pitch level" (1980: 264). In this study I have considered intonation in its narrow sense, and I shall now refer to the other features -which are not strictly rises and falls in pitch level- as *other prosodic features*.

Apart from the various prosodic features taken into account by Crystal, Johns-Lewis includes pause phenomena (frequency, duration and distribution of pauses). Silence is considered by this author to be a useful prosodic parameter which can even distinguish between types of discourse.

In analysing the different ironic utterances in the LLC, I have observed that some prosodic features tend to occur repeatedly together with irony. Stress, for example, seems to

occur repeatedly on words or phrases that are crucial for the ironic interpretation. Indeed, Tannen (1984) shows in her analysis of the conversation at a Thanksgiving dinner among friends, that heavy stress and breathy voice quality are used to exaggerate the content of utterances and, in that way, be ironic (1984: 86). Breathy voice quality is not marked in the LLC, and, for that reason, it will not be possible to account for it in this study.

Many instances have also been found in which an increase in pitch level (not necessarily accompanied by falls or rises) occurred at strategic points in the ironic utterances. This is called "booster" by Svartvik and Quirk and is marked by means of a colon (:) before the "boosted" syllable, or by means of an exclamation mark (!) in cases of exaggerated high pitch. Tannen (1984) considers high pitch as part of expressive phonology, used in many cases to show a mocking ironic style. In some of the ironic utterances in the LLC, both a kinetic tone and an increase in pitch occur on the same syllable, as is the case with example 3 in 6.2, in which we can observe a falling tone together with a "booster" mark on the second syllable of "almighty". Both prosodic phenomena coincide or co-occur to give prominence to a key word in the ironic metaphor "God Almighty" (remember the speakers are criticising a teacher to whom they referred previously as a "bastard", and that they do not approve of his "know-it-all" attitude).

Laughter and/or giggles have proved to be other recurrent prosodic features accompanying irony. Finally and

interestingly, pauses and silence also seem to have been strategically placed by certain speakers in some of the texts to convey certain ironic meanings.

In view of all this, a study of these features in connection with the findings in the corpus becomes necessary at this point of the discussion.

6.3.1 Stress

As will be reported in detail in 6.4, most of the examples analysed for this survey display the use (on the part of the speaker) of stress on "key" words. The words which have been considered as "key" here are those which were judged as important for the ironic interpretation. In many cases, this stress coincides with the kinetic tone, but, in others, the kinetic tone on a given word was not enough, and the speaker considered it necessary to stress some other words which seem to have been thought of as equally important to convey the ironic meaning. The following is a clear example, in which the word "bright" is uttered with stress on it, although it is not the one containing the kinetic stress. The speaker is being ironic about the students' attitudes and feelings, and it is evident that he does not think that their feelings are "bright":

[1]

```
A 11 ^funnily e:n\ough#
A 11 I ^made it completely :v\oluntary with the
A 11 st/udents#
A 11 ^=and# -
A 11 ^I !know 'Tom and . :J\ack#
```

A 11 ^the !other 'two 'lecturers :thought it would
A 11 !{f\old up} in !n\o 'time#
A 11 you ^kn/ow#
A 11 ^funnily en/ough#
A 11 ^students !kept c\oming in and s/ayi#g# .
A 11 ((can I ^do)) phil/ology 'please#
A 11 ^you kn/ow#
A 21 (- laughs) ^and *'so* it's
B 11 *^[\m]##
A 11 +gr/\owing#+
A 11 ^rather than di!m\inishing#
A 21 ^which
B 11 +^[\m]##+
B 11 *^[mh\m]##
A 11 !I ((*!feel* pl\eased))#
A 11 you ^kn/ow#
A 11 ((^this is where 1 to 2 sylls !{t\en@z}#))
A 11 ^comes 'smack in the :(\eye) for !th\em#
A 11 (- laughs) that ^students ":\are interested#
A 11 in ^l\anguage#
A 11 but then ^Tom's re'action to :th\is /is# -
A 11 ^[=@m]# .
A 11 [?] well they're ^only 'trying to :d\istance
A 11 thems/elves#
A 11 from ^l\iterature# - .
A 11 ^well I mean !this is com'plete h\ooey# .
B 11 ^[\m]#
A 11 - de^pending _how you "l\ook on 'language# - -
A 11 and ^th\en#
A 11 ^he s/ays#
A 11 you know ^literature should be ex"_p\eried#
A 11 and ^not !st\udied# - .
A 11 well ^this is !f\ine#
A 11 un^til you've g\ot them#
A 11 ^writing ex"!\/ams#
A 11 and they've ^got to 'write 'down 'these 'bright
A 11 :f\eelings of 'theirs#
A 11 and they ^feel 'em so d/eep#
A 11 that they ^can't ex!pr\ess 'em#
A 11 (- laughs) *^you* kn/ow# - - -

(LLC, S.1.6.)

This same example will be analysed later on in connection with another of the prosodic features which have been detected as contributing to ironic meanings, namely "booster" or "pitch rise", for, as can be observed, stress is not the only meaningful feature occurring in this ironic utterance. Intonation, stress,

high pitch and laughter work together here to contribute to the ironic interpretation of this conversation.

Following is another example in which stress seems to be important as an irony marker:

[2]

```
A    11  ^how do you get \on with :(^Th\orpe#)#
B    11  ^((\oh))# -
B    11  ((we)) ^get on 'quite !w\ell I 'think# .
B    11  ^rare oc_casions _I s/ee 'him#
B    20  ( . giggles)
A    20  ( . giggles) - - -
```

(LLC, S.1.6)

Although the kinetic stress of the clause "I get on quite well" falls on the word "well", there is also stress on the word "quite" which is thus given a certain prominence and later on, after the after-comment "rare occasions I see him" can be interpreted as placed on purpose to convey quite a contrary idea; i.e., that they do not get on "so well", or to say it another way, it leaves the door open to interpret that they get on well because they hardly ever see each other, and that, if they met more often, they would probably not get on "so well".

As has already been stated, the examples in which stress seems to play an important part within the ironic meaning are numerous. For the sake of illustration, I consider that the foregoing examples are enough, and thus I shall continue the analysis and discussion of the other prosodic features that have proved to be outstanding among the ironic utterances studied in the corpus.

6.3.2 Increase in pitch level

As noted above, Svartvik and Quirk use the "booster" system to indicate range of pitch, which is a different thing from direction of pitch. Allan (1986) notes how a change in pitch level or "key" can change the meaning of an utterance. The example he provides is the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | the Robinsons [high key] |
| 1) We gave it to our neighbours, | [mid key] |
| 2) We gave it to our neighbours, | |
| | the Robinsons [low key] |

The shift to high key in 1) shows that the speaker regards it as important that "it" was given to the Robinsons. The downshift in 2 indicates that he considers this information as parenthetically and relatively unimportant (1986: 60). Brown & Levinson (1987: 72) note that in Tzeltal there is a highly conventionalised use of high pitch or falsetto, which marks polite or formal interchanges, operating as a kind of giant hedge on everything that is said, and that its use seems to release the speaker from responsibility for believing the truth of what he utters. It would not be illogical to suppose that a change in key could also be significant for cases of verbal irony. When a speaker wants to convey an ironic meaning, there may be some words or phrases that he wants to signal as "more important" by means of a shift to high pitch.

In the following chunk of dialogue (which partially coincides with the chunk presented in 6.3.1 [1]), a great deal of verbal irony can be felt and inferred from A's words. An

increase in the pitch of some key words can be observed, as it is shown by the booster symbols (: or !). The speakers (A, a female academic, and B, a male academic) are being sarcastic about the Head of Department's approach to literature:

[1]

A 11 - de^pending _how you "!!\ook on 'language# - -
 A 11 and "^th\en#
 A 11 ^he s/ays#
 A 11 you know ^literature should be ex"_p\eried#
 A 11 and ^not !st\udied# - .
 A 11 well ^this is !!f\ine#
 A 11 un^til you've g\ot them#
 A 11 ^writing ex"!\/ams#
 A 11 and they've ^got to 'write 'down 'these 'bright
 A 11 :f\eelings of 'theirs#
 A 11 and they ^feel 'em so d/eep#
 A 11 that they ^can't ex!pr\ess 'em#
 A 11 (- laughs) **you* kn/ow# - - -
 A 11 ^\added to _which#
 A 21 "^\I
 B 11 **[\m]#*
 A 11 think#
 A 11 it en"^c\ourages#
 A 11 the "^(l\azy) ":st\udent#
 A 11 to ^go to h/im#
 A 12 and say ^I I ^s\ay#
 A 11 ^this is ((is)) 'what they ld\o# .
 A 11 (- sighs) ^I !read a b\ook 'last n/ight# .
 A 11 and it ^moved me !!s\o m/uch#
 A 11 ^I _can't t\alk a'bout it# - -
 A 11 ^now !this is _a a "lg\orgeous#
 A 11 ^lazy _way \out#
 A 11 ^you !!s/ee#
 A 11 ^he's t/aken \in 'by th/is#
 A 11 ^dear _s/oul#
 A 21 (- laughs) a**bid*ing
 B 20 *[m]* **(- coughs)**
 A 11 'faith in **'English !!!\it**erature#
 A 11 ^y\ou kn/ow#

(LLC, S.1.6)

The whole comment has an ironic tone, but there are three parts of it that seem to carry the main ironic load. The first one is when A says that the students' feelings are "bright" and that

"they feel them so deep that they can't express them". Here we notice there is an increase of pitch before the first syllable of "feelings" and the second syllable of "express". In both cases the syllable in question bears a kinetic tone as well. It is clearly understood here that A does not think the students' feelings are bright and, even more, that they cannot have any feelings at all (and probably this is the reason for the booster and the falling rising tone on "feelings") since A believes they are lazy and will tend not to read any books if the teacher has such "crazy" ideas as the Head of Department's.

The second part in which irony is heavily shown is an example of "pretence irony", since the speaker (A) is imitating a lazy student in his way out of studying literature. I refer to: "I read a book last night and it....". The booster is placed here before the word "so", which is clearly done to emphasise and exaggerate the student's supposed enthusiasm with the book in order to cause a contradictory effect: the hearer infers that obviously the student was not moved at all and did not even read the book. The victims of irony here are the lazy students, who will always try to cheat the teacher if he allows them to do so. Indirectly, there is a second victim, namely the Head of Department, whose loose behaviour with the students would - according to A's views- cause these effects.

The third part of this example having a clear and identifiable ironic intention is "He's taken in by..." (in bold type), where there is some "boosting" before the word "soul" and before the first syllable of "Literature". The speaker is using

here religious register ("soul", "abiding faith in") with a twofold purpose: 1) to ironically point to the Head of Department's naive thoughts, and 2) to imply that the students are not any "dear souls" or any innocent "literature-faithful" beings. The boosting or pitch increase on "soul" and on "Literature" may serve to achieve these effects, together with other contextual and prosodic features (such as laughter and intonation). As can be observed, in most cases, the "boosting and the kinetic tones coincide on the same syllable, though there are some cases in which they do not, as in the last example ("literature" has a booster but no kinetic tone). This shows that pitch level can sometimes be independent of intonation and that it can alone be used as a prominence marker having ironic effects at the same time.

Other examples were found in which the booster was placed on other syllables than the one bearing the kinetic tone, as is the case in the following chunk of dialogue in which the speakers (two academics) are criticising another lecturer:

[2]

B 12 he ^l\ooked '[@:m] - com^pl\etely unrefl/ective#
 B 11 as ^though he _just _had . [?] a !pattern in his
 B 11 :h\ead# .
 B 11 and . ((he)) ^ex"lp\ounded#
 B 11 with ^great "lfl\uency#
 B 11 at a ^moment's *ln\otice##
 A 11 *^y\es##
 A 11 ^y\es#
 B 11 ^and as lthough he 'wasn't 'really :c\onscious#
 B 11 of ^what the !pattern !w\as#
 B 11 he'd ((^been ex:p\ounding#))
 B 11 ^that was the im":pr\ession *((he 'gave#))*
 A 11 *^[\m]## .
 A 11 ^[=m]# - -

B 11 ^spoke in !beautifully 'fluent _French : \English#
A 20 (- - laughs) .
B 11 it was ^quite f \unny#
B 11 if you ^transl\ated the 'words#
B 11 ^back !literally 'into :Fr \ench#
B 11 you ^found the con'struction was :p \er'fect#
B 11 as ^far ((as)) . _ (m \y 'French) could !t \ell# -
B 12 ((^kn \owledge of 'French _which)) - - was ^rather
B 12 'strange ! \English# - - -
B 11 ^[\m]#
B 11 ^haven't _thought of h/im#
B 11 for ^y \ears#
A 11 (- - laughs) -

(LLC, S.1.6)

When B says that the lecturer spoke in "beautifully fluent French English", he is being ironic. The booster on the word "beautifully" (a modifier of "fluent") is strategically placed with a mocking intention. The prominence given to this word by the high pitch may, at the beginning (before hearing the word "French"), be thought of as a device used to stress and remark how well the lecturer spoke English, but as soon as he inserts the word "French", a contradiction arises, and the ironic meaning is worked out or inferred: his English was not beautifully fluent; he had a lot of interference from French.

All the foregoing suggests that in ironic utterances there is not only one prosodic feature working in isolation. In this particular section, we have seen how an increase in pitch level can work together with intonation and stress -the three features being present on the same syllable in some cases, or on different syllables or words in others- in order to distribute the prominence load along different strategic points in the utterance. But there are still other prosodic features which are worth examining, namely *laughter* and *silence/pauses*.

6.3.3 Laughter

In chapter 4, I wrote about the relationship of irony to humour. It could be noted that irony and some kinds of jokes are very closely related, and it was also shown how verbal irony generally elicits the external or "internal" laughter of one or more of the participants. Laughter is, thus, a feature which very frequently accompanies the phenomenon of verbal irony.

As may have already been noticed, the majority of the examples presented so far in this chapter include laughter or giggles strategically placed in connection with the ironic utterances. In some cases, it may be the laughter of the ironist to add one more clue to the ironic remark; in some others, it is the laughter of the hearer to show that he has understood the irony intended by the speaker. Deborah Tannen (1984), in her analysis of irony and joking in a conversation among friends, pinpoints the different ironic styles of two of her friends, and shows how one of them often follows his ironic comments with laughter (because his style is always dramatized through exaggerated enunciation and is mock tough, mock annoyed or mock solicitous) while the other never laughs after his ironic utterances (because his style is mock serious). The findings of Tannen's analysis tell us that many times laughter is an irony marker, but, on other occasions, the ironic speaker does not laugh precisely because he is simulating seriousness, and this requires a deadpan style, with no apparent prosodic features marking the irony: "Only the knowledge that the question was not

serious, and the deliberate, clipped quality make it clear that the answer is not meant seriously" (1984: 139).

Consider now the following example from the LLC, in which the same speakers of example [2] in the previous section (6.3.1) are criticising another lecturer:

- [1]
- A 11 ^oh d\ear#
 A 12 ^what was 'he - ^I can't even re!member !what he
 A 12 was d/\oing#
 A 11 the ^day I :went to his :l\ecture#
 A 11 but ^I re!member that 'he - :brought 'out !thr\ee
 A 11 'things _in# .
 A 11 "^\Old /English#
 A 12 ((^you !cl\assicists)) [??] ^you've _probably not
 A 12 !d\one Old /English#
 A 11 ^h\ave 'you# -
 A 11 ^c\ourse you 'haven't# - -
 A 11 ^bin_dan 'rin_dan _and w\in'dan#
 A 11 the ^three v\erbs#
 A 11 ^[?]all . ((are)) rh/yming#
 A 11 ^and 'they !\all ((are)) :d=oing#
 A 11 with ^something 'going :r\ound#
 A 11 ^bin_dan to b\ind#
 A 11 ^win_dan to w\ind#
 A 11 and . ^rin'dan :to . "!\r\ind#
 A 11 you ^kn/ow#
 A 11 a ^p\ig#
 A,B 20 (- - laugh)
 B 11 *(- - - laughs)* **^[/\m]#**
 A 11 **^this is the !\only thing I've 'brought a!!w\ay
 A 11 from that l\ecture#
 A 11 -* - - I'm ^not quite 'sure what he was . trying
 A 11 **to** . pr\ove with th/em#
 A 11 ^when he'd !f\inished#
 A 20 (*-* - - laughs)
 B 20 *(- laughs)*

(LLC, S.1.6)

When A says that she is not quite sure what the lecturer "was trying to prove with them when he'd finished", she is using "mild" irony to mean that in fact she thinks the lecturer's classes were pointless and boring. I say "mild" irony because

the speaker uses a "hedge" ("not quite sure") when, in fact, she lets the hearer understand that she was sure that his classes were not interesting at all. A reinforces this idea with her laughter, and B also laughs to show that he understands and that he is her "accomplice" in the criticism.

In some particular cases, the laughter can be ironic (generally sarcastic) in itself, without the need of any linguistic clue. Consider the following dyad which could occur between two people, A and B. A (a woman) knows that B (her boyfriend) is a liar and that he does not love her (he has proved so after repeated actions showing lack of care and respect):

B: "I love you. Believe me."

A: "Ha, Ha, Ha." (laughter)

In this case, the laughter means "that is not true and I don't believe you. You're a liar". The contradiction here lies in what the man says and what he really does, which makes A understand his utterance as having an opposite meaning to the literal one, namely, "I don't love you".

A similar example seems to be the following from LLC, in which a woman is talking about her teaching experience:

[2]

C 11 land I've ^got about - !twenty \O-'level#
 C 11 1^b\oys#
 b 20 1yeah
 C 11 1who ^are . sort of . !!{M/iss} M/iss#
 C 11 1^they've de'cided to 'call me M\iss you s/ee#
 b 20 1yeah
 C 11 1[@m] . ^M\iss they say#
 C 11 1" ^wh\y#
 C 11 1do we ^have to 'study p\oetry 'Miss# -
 C 11 1^M\iss#
 b 20 1I see
 C 12 land ^things they're ^great f\un#

C 11 1they ^ask too 'many :damn qu\estions#
b 20 1*(. laughs)*
C 11 1*.* you ^kn/ow#
C 11 1but [@m] . they're ^all en!thusi\astic#
C 11 1and they ^think I'm all r\ight#
C 20 1*(. laughs)*

(LLC, S.7.1)

In this case, C is being sarcastic with herself, because she laughs at the fact that her students think "she is all right". The laughter shows the irony because what she means with it is that she believes her students are naive for believing so. In fact, what she thinks of herself is that she is not "all right". She is being critical of herself.

There is a great number of other examples in which laughter and/or giggles play an important part in the whole ironic meaning, but I will not include them here for the sake of redundancy. They will nevertheless be taken into account for the results section of this chapter, in which an account of the prosodic features accompanying irony will be made. I shall now turn to another of these features which seems to be meaningful when associated to irony. I refer to *silence* or *pauses* in the conversation.

6.3.4 Silence and/or pauses

Many authors have directed their attention to the study of silence in discourse. Dennis Kurzon (1992), for example, claims that silence may mean power in some particular situations.

Kurzon concentrates on the silent response to a polar or wh-interrogative and tries to show that at times it is the silent person who uses his/her silence to gain control of the situation to attain power (1992: 93). Gray (1992), when analysing the "elements of assertive asking" states the following:

<<One of the key elements of assertive asking is to remain silent after you have asked for support. Allow your partner to work through their resistance. Be careful not to disapprove of his grumbles. As long as you pause and remain silent, you have the possibility of getting his support. If you break the silence you lose power.>> (1992: 268).

We have already seen how irony may be used by a person in power (chapter 5), and it is not impossible to conceive of a situation in which silence would be strategically used to be ironic and show power at the same time. In certain situations, a person may opt to not give a response to show or let his interlocutor infer that his question was so stupid that it is not worth answering. Indeed, Varol Akman reinforces this argument in his squib "When Silence may mean Derision" (1994). Akman asserts that in some instances silence can be understood as a speech act of the form "I will not participate in order to show people (the listeners or in general, others present) that you are a laughingstock" (1994: 213). Akman also explains that the circumstances in which "silence means derision" are generally distinguished by the existence of an "audience" in addition to a questioner and an addressee with a shared knowledge of the audience about the qualities of the addressee and the questioner. I believe the examples he gives can also be understood as ironic

silence and, for that reason, I shall quote one of them:

<<The setting is a country after a military coup. A famous professor of law (X) is being questioned in a military court. In the past he played a major role in the preparation of the constitution. X is now being accused of assisting the activities of a secret organization to destroy the nation's sovereignty. The judge (Y) builds her case on the allegation that X has violated a specific constitutional provision. When X objects to this claim and tries to demonstrate why there is no basis for the allegation, Y explodes: "What do you mean when you say that I'm misrepresenting or misreading the constitution? What makes you think that you know better?"

Surely X knows better! After all he was instrumental in drafting the entire constitution in its final form. X, nonetheless, just keeps silent>> (1994: 212)

Perhaps this example could be better explained by saying that X uses silence to implicitly mean derision or to ridicule others - as it is many times the case with verbal negative irony or sarcasm. But at the same time he wants to point to an instance of situational irony, namely, the fact that he is accused of misinterpreting the constitution when he in fact played a major role in its preparation.

If we think of this issue in terms of Brown & Levinson's Theory of Politeness, it can be said that silence may become an FTA in itself (as was anticipated in 5.4). Brown & Levinson pay attention to this fact in their note n° 64, in which they state:

<<A conversational viewpoint directs us also to the use of carefully located silence as a means of accomplishing an FTA even where our super-strategy 5 (Don't do the FTA at all) is enjoined. Thus in Tamil, polite acceptances may be conveyed by deliberate silences, as illustrated by the glosses in this passage (where A is a man, and W is his friend's new bride):
A: Do you sing?
W: (silence)

A: Hooray! Give us a song!
 Similarly, in Tamil the politest refusal is simply no answer at all; hence if A writes to B for a favour and B does not reply, this signifies a polite refusal.>>
 (1987: 295)

McCarthy & Carter (1994) exemplify the use of silence as a deliberate strategy in the exercise of power, and subsequently note:

<<Deliberate suspension of a turn can be profoundly unsettling and can be as effective in the assertion of dominance as the refusal to allow a turn to someone else. Remaining silent can be construed as impolite, non-committal or threatening depending on our interpretation of that silence in the context of the particular sequence of dramatic exchanges... Pauses, too, can produce similar effects.>> (1994: 139)

In the LLC I have observed cases of meaningful silence realised in the form of longer or shorter pauses which are strategically placed within the piece of ironic discourse. Consider the following:

[1]

B	13	*^well . !last ^last y\/ear* we had a . we ^had a
B	13	d\inner#
B	11	^no it was a :finalists' re!c\option#
B	11	^w\asn't it# .
B	11	in ^which !six f\inalists turned 'up# .
B	11	and "every 'member of !st\aff#
VAR	20	(- - - laugh)
A	11	[e] ^\every 'member of 'staff#
B	11	^every 'member of :st\/aff turned 'up#
B	11	but ^only !six !f\inalists#
C	11	^oh +(^G\od#)#+
VAR	20	*(- - - murmuring)*
A	11	*+(. coughs)+ well ^that 'wasn't so :g\ood#
A	11	^w\as it#
A	20	[@:m]
B	12	the ^Christmas '[pa:] ((at)) the ^Christmas
B	12	:p\arty#
B	11	we ^((there was)) !stacks* of :b\/ooze# .
B	11	and a^g\ain all the st/aff 'came#
B	11	+. and ((only)) ^one or two
B	11	'under!gr\aduates#;- - -+;
VAR	20	+(- - - laugh)+

C 20 +((6 to 8 sylls))+
 A 11 you ^mean in lother w\ords#
 A 11 in the [dhi: 'dhi:] the ^{b\usiness of [dhi:]}.
 A 11 [dhi: 'dhi:] 'staff 'student rell\ations# .
 A 12 ^it's it's ^not the !st\aff who are# .
 A 11 ^who are *. ((_making a _very _poor b=usiness#))*
 B 11 *^no n/\o#
 B 11 it's ((6 to 8 sylls it's))* the ^students :by and
 B 11 :l\arge#

(LLC, S.3.3)

Pause is marked in the LLC by means of dashes (--). Each dash is a unit pause of one stress unit or "foot". Brief pauses (of one light syllable) are marked with a plus sign (+).

When B says that only one or two undergraduates came to the party, he apparently is not criticising them, but the contrast that is implicitly made of the undergraduates with all the members of the staff, together with the pauses after the word "undergraduates", give an ironic effect to his utterance. It is as if the speaker said: "I am not going to say anything else, so I will now keep silent in order for you to draw your own conclusions about the undergraduates' behaviour". The laughter of various participants of the conversation that comes immediately after the silence is also revealing: the listeners want to show that they received the message. Then A tries to explain the conveyed ironic meaning by expressing it "literally" (you mean, in other words...).

That silence can help convey and understand ironic meanings is not surprising if we consider that, in all cases (even when there are no pauses or silence), much of what is interpreted is what the speaker has not said, rather than what

he has said'. The foregoing example can be considered an example of irony in which the speaker means what he says, but, in addition, tries to make his listeners understand that he means something else. I wrote about this kind of irony in chapters 2 and 3, to show that it could not always be said that the ironic speaker always meant "the opposite" of the literal meaning of his utterance.

Another example in which it seems that pauses play an important part in the ironic content is the following conversation between a couple, in which a man (b) is trying to mock his wife's obsession with buying everything at a very cheap price:

- [2]
- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| a | 11 | ^let's have a 'nip d\own# |
| a | 11 | to ^Head'quarter and G\eneral# |
| a | 11 | ((and)) ^see if they 'have 'anything in 'that . |
| a | 11 | sort of 'fifty-'nine b\ob# - |
| a | 11 | ^two pound t/en 'range# |
| b | 11 | ^r\ight# . |
| b | 11 | and the ^\other 'place to l\ook# |
| b | 11 | is ^on the 'back of a !W\eetabix# |
| a | 21 | (- laughs) |
| b | 11 | ((a)) ^c\ornflake _packet# - - - |
| b | 11 | ^((might)) have these !\offers# - - - |
| b | 11 | ^ [=m]# . |
| b | 11 | [g] ^give \over# |
| b | 20 | (- - laughs) - - - |

(LLC, S.1.4)

Again, the pauses here are made in order to let the hearer (in this case, the wife) understand that he means "more than what he is saying". He is laughing at his wife's intentions to buy a bed at so cheap a price and that is why he scornfully speaks of

⁷ Verbal irony has, in fact, much to do with "insinuation", as defined by Bertuccioli Papi (1996).

"finding an offer at the back of a Weetabix cornflake packet".

Finally, I consider it appropriate to include an example from *The Golden Girls* scripts (though, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter, it will not be considered in the final account of cases of prosodic features) in which a timely pause "says more" than if the speaker had actually spoken. The girls are here talking about how Blanche and Sophia were cheated by a man and a woman (who was dressed as a nun):

[3] Rose: You two were victims of the oldest confidence game going: the pigeon drop.

Blanche: But he just seemed so honest,

Rose: Well, that's why it's called a confidence game. I mean, he has to win your confidence or you wouldn't put up the money.

Sophia: It wasn't his idea -the nun suggested it.

Rose: She was part of the team. They always work in pairs.

Sophia: I don't know what the church is coming to. I thought it stopped with Bingo.

Rose: That was no nun. I work for a consumer protection show. We've been warning people about this for months. Once these scamsters have your money in an envelope, they make a switch and you wind up with worthless paper. They prey on the old and gullible.

Blanche: Are you calling me gullible?

Rose: No, ---- . (silence)

(GG, 1991: 229)

This silence, which is strategically placed after the "no", serves to "trigger" the implicature that Rose was calling her "old", and thus has an ironical effect because, although Rose seems to be answering that Blanche is not gullible and, consequently, appears to be kind to her, she is at the same time

calling her old, which creates a clash of intentions and suddenly makes Rose become "not so kind".

In view of all this, it becomes clear that there is more than one prosodic feature that can be said to be present and help the process of conveying and interpreting ironic utterances. I have analysed those which seem to be more prominent and important in the corpus, although I am conscious of the fact that there are other features which could have been analysed, such as nasalisation or breathy voice (which are also used to convey ironic meanings -see Tannen (1984)-). I have not included them in my study because they are not marked in the LLC. This is precisely one of the criticisms that could be made of the LLC, namely, that not all prosodic features are duly marked.

I shall now proceed to show the results of the survey made in this part of my work, whose purpose was to measure the frequency of occurrence of each of these features in ironic utterances.

6.4 The Survey

6.4.1 Account and Results

After the analysis of the prosodic features in some of the examples in the corpus, and in order to give more accurate answers to my research questions in this chapter, it was considered necessary to quantify the occurrences of such features so as to be able to make judgements and draw conclusions based on their frequency of occurrence. For that purpose, a data base

was created. The variables taken into account were those prosodic features that were found together with the ironic utterances analysed with certain frequency. Specifically, I refer to a) Tone, b) Stress, c) High pitch, d) Laughter/giggles and e) Meaningful silence/pauses. These were, then, the dependent variables of this piece of research, the independent variable being given by the eighty-six instances of ironic utterances found in the LLC corpus.

6.4.1.1 Tone

To keep up with the order followed in the analysis, I shall first refer to the results of the survey with respect to Tone. The procedure carried out consisted in counting the times each of the tones occurred in the 86 examples of ironic discourse found in the LLC. This was not an easy task, considering that irony many times extends to more than one tone group and even to more than one sentence; however, the tone taken into account was that which occurred in the sentence (or sometimes only the tone group) containing the clearer and heavier ironic load.

The results of such an account are shown in table 6.1 and Figures 6a and 6b, where the numbers have to be considered in relation to a total of 86 (eighty-six) occurrences.

Notice that, within the tones used by the speakers in the ironic utterances -in a scale from the most frequent to the least frequent- the order is the following:

1- Fall, 2- Fall-rise, 3- Rise, 4- Rise-Fall, 5- Level.

6.4.1.2 Other prosodic features: Stress, high Pitch, laughter/giggles and meaningful silence/pauses

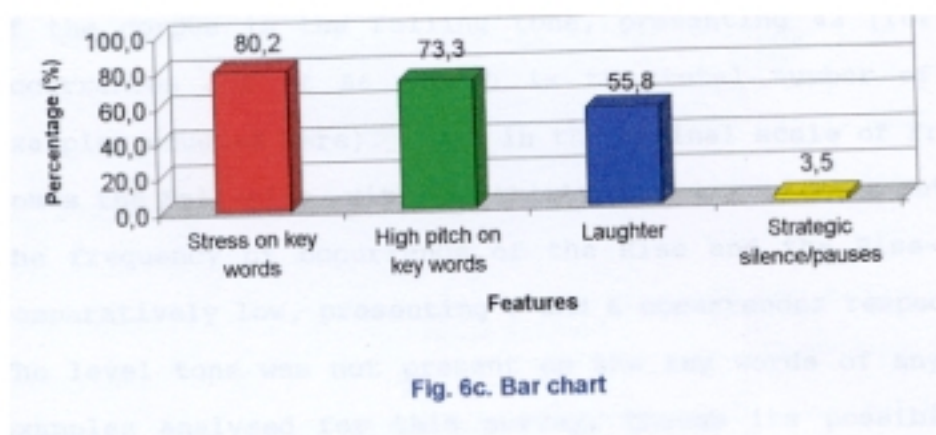
The next step in the survey was to count the number of times that the other prosodic features (stress, high pitch, laughter or giggles and meaningful silence or pauses) occurred at strategic points in the ironic utterances studied.

It is important to note here that, contrary to the case of the Tone variable (where only one tone occurs for each example), the occurrence of one feature does not exclude the occurrence of any of the others, and that is why the number of occurrences for each feature cannot be summed up to reach a total of 86. All these features can co-occur in only one instance of ironic discourse.

Table 6.2 and figure 6c show the number and percentage of occurrences of the prosodic features with respect to the total number of ironic utterances. In this table and this figure, it can be observed that both *stress* and *high pitch* on key words are rather frequent phenomena (80.23% and 73.3% of occurrences respectively). Laughter and/or giggles seem to be a frequent feature too. Forty-eight of the examples analysed had explicit laughter or giggles included as a prosodic feature. Meaningful ironic silence or pauses have proved not to be a frequent feature, representing 3.5% of the total number of occurrences of ironic utterances.

Table 6.2. Percentage of occurrences of the prosodic features (other than intonation) intervening in the ironic utterances in the corpus

FEATURES	Stress on key words	High pitch on key words	Laughter	Strategic silence/pauses	Total
Percentage	80,2	73,3	55,8	3,5	100
Occurrences	69	63	48	3	86



6.4.2 Discussion of the results

As was anticipated, this survey intends to be neither a definitive nor an exhaustive study of the prosodic features used and understood by speakers and hearers of verbal irony. However, it is viewed as a useful analysis to clarify the topic to a certain extent. As table 6.1 and figures 6a and 6b show, the tone which is most frequently used in the ironic utterances of the corpus is the falling tone, presenting 42 (forty two) occurrences out of 86 (which is the total number of ironic examples studied here). Next in the ordinal scale of frequency comes the Fall-rise, with 31 (thirty-one) occurrences out of 86. The frequency of occurrence of the Rise and the Rise-fall is comparatively low, presenting 7 and 6 occurrences respectively. The level tone was not present on the key words of any of the examples analysed for this survey, though its possibility of occurrence is not discarded.

It can be observed, then, that the tones that seem most likely to occur in ironic utterances are the fall (48% of occurrences) and the fall-rise (36% of occurrences), which together make up 84% of the total number of occurrences. But this tendency towards the use of fall-rise and fall in ironic utterances would prove to be more valid -according to statistical standards- if it were somehow different from the general tendency of tones used in English in non-ironic utterances. In other words, we might find that the tones most frequently used in English for all kinds of utterances are the fall or the fall-

rise, and thus the same tendency found for irony would not reveal anything in particular as regards the intonation of ironic utterances. If, on the contrary, it is found that the tendency for non-ironic utterances is other than the one found for ironic ones, then we shall be able to speak of a particular intonation used by ironic speakers. With that idea in mind, and following Prof. Craig Chaudron's advice (1995, personal communication), I carried out a statistical account of the tones used in the non-ironic utterances of the same corpus (LLC). This was made on a random basis, using the table of random numbers for the selections of the pages to be surveyed in each of the texts. The results can be examined in table 6.3 and figures 6d and 6e. The total number of tone groups counted for this analysis was 2,045 (two thousand and forty-five) of which 1,157 (one thousand, one hundred and fifty-seven) were falls, 367 (three hundred and sixty-seven) were fall-rises, 363 (three hundred and sixty-three) were rises, 61 (sixty-one) were rise-falls and 97 (ninety-seven) were level tones.

Table 6.4 and figure 6f illustrate the comparative study of the occurrences of the different tones for both ironic and non-ironic utterances.

Table 6.3. Percentage of occurrence of the different tones within the non-ironic utterances in the corpus.

TONES	Fall-rise	Rise	Fall	Rise-fall	Level	Total
Percentage	17,9	17,8	56,6	3,0	4,7	100
Occurrence	367	363	1157	61	97	2045

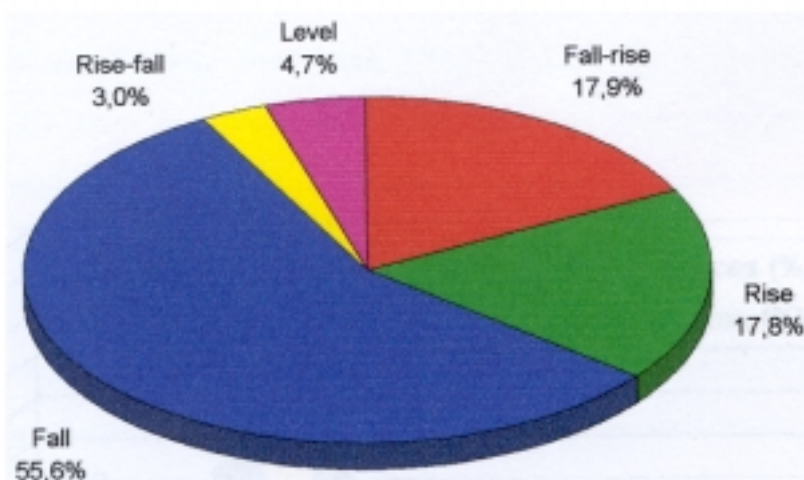


Fig. 6d. Pie chart

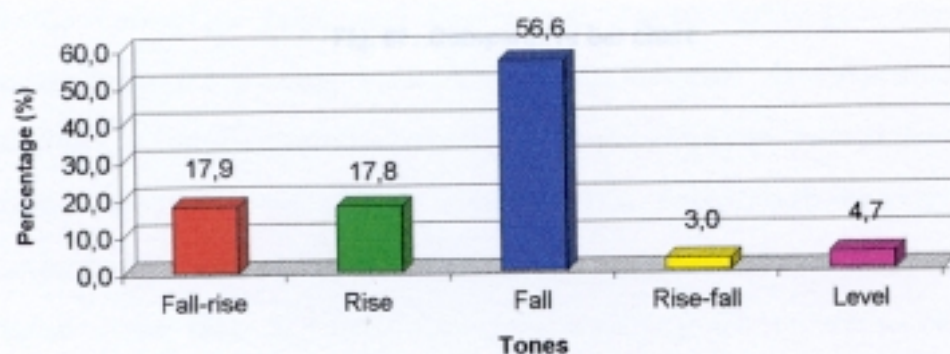


Fig. 6e. Bar chart

Table 6.4. Comparison of the frequencies of occurrence of the different tones in the ironic & non-ironic utterances in the LLC corpus.

TONES	Fall-rise	Fall	Rise	Rise-fall	Level	Total
Ironiic utterances (%)	36,0	48,8	8,2	7,0	0,0	100
Non-ironic utter. (%)	17,9	56,6	17,8	3,0	4,7	100

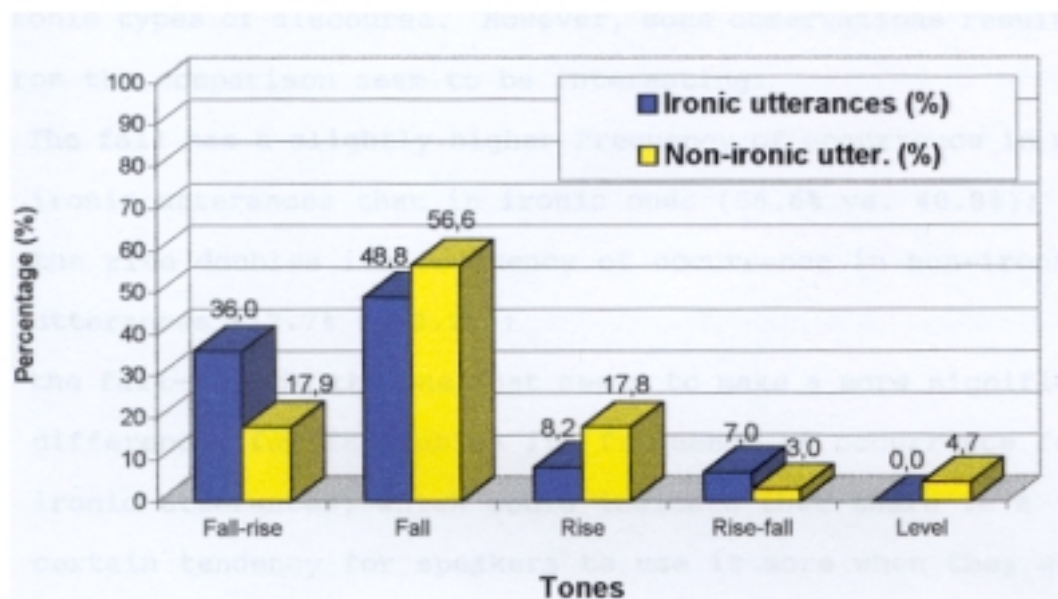


Fig. 6f . Comparative bar chart

The results of the account and of the comparison of occurrences of the different tones yield the following information about the tones of the utterances of the corpus studied:

- First and foremost, both the falling and falling-rising tones appear to be the most widely used ones in both ironic and non-ironic types of discourse. However, some observations resulting from the comparison seem to be interesting:
- * The fall has a slightly higher frequency of occurrence in non-ironic utterances than in ironic ones (56.6% vs. 48.8%);
- * the rise doubles its frequency of occurrence in non-ironic utterances (17.7% vs 8.2%);
- * the fall-rise is the one that seems to make a more significant difference, for it doubles its frequency of occurrence for ironic utterances, which could indicate that there is a certain tendency for speakers to use it more when they want to be ironic than when they do not;
- * both the rise-fall and the level tones have low rates of occurrence in both ironic and non-ironic discourse. The slight differences between the percentages for these tones do not appear to be significant. The fact that there are no occurrences of level tones in the particular examples analysed here does not discard its probability of occurrence, for, in fact, the intuitions of native speakers tell that the level tone can also be used in ironic utterances (Craig Chaudron, 1995: personal communication);
- * the χ^2 (chi square) results show that the tone variable has an

incidence on ironic utterances, i.e., there is a significant difference in the use of tones between ironic and non-ironic discourse. Thus, one part of the hypothesis laid out at the beginning of this survey can be confirmed, in the sense that there is not only one specific or particular tone for ironic utterances, although the frequency of distribution of the different tones is different, and consequently it can be said that ironic and non-ironic utterances do not behave in the same manner with respect to tone distribution. In other words, the null hypothesis is not confirmed: there is a significant difference between ironic and non-ironic language with respect to tone. (See Appendix 4, "Chi-squared test" for Hypothesis n°11).

In some cases, a particular tone co-occurs with heavy stress and an increase of pitch on one or some of the key ironic words, as well as with laughter and/or giggles. It has been found (analysing the distribution of features in the data base) that, in some cases, all the features studied here co-occur, though, in some others, the only prosodic feature apparent is tone (see Appendix 1, b). In any case, there is always at least one prosodic feature which helps to give special prominence to certain key words or pieces of discourse, to the point that in some situations even *silence* can be a means of providing prosodic prominence with ironic intentions.

Table 6.5 and Figure 6g shows the cross-tabulation of the variables, which provides a quantification of the variables

that co-occur. The vertical axis contains the different tones. The horizontal axis, the other prosodic features studied. This table permits a clearer view of the possible correlations between tone and the occurrence of other prosodic features.

Table 6.5. Percentage of occurrence of each of the prosodic features with respect to the different tones (cross-tabulation).

TONES / FEATURES	stress on key words	High pitch on key words	Laughther	Strategic silence/pauses
Fall	78,6	71,4	59,5	4,8
Rise	42,9	42,9	42,9	0,0
Fall-rise	87,1	74,2	54,5	3,2
Rise-Fall	100,0	66,6	50,0	0,0

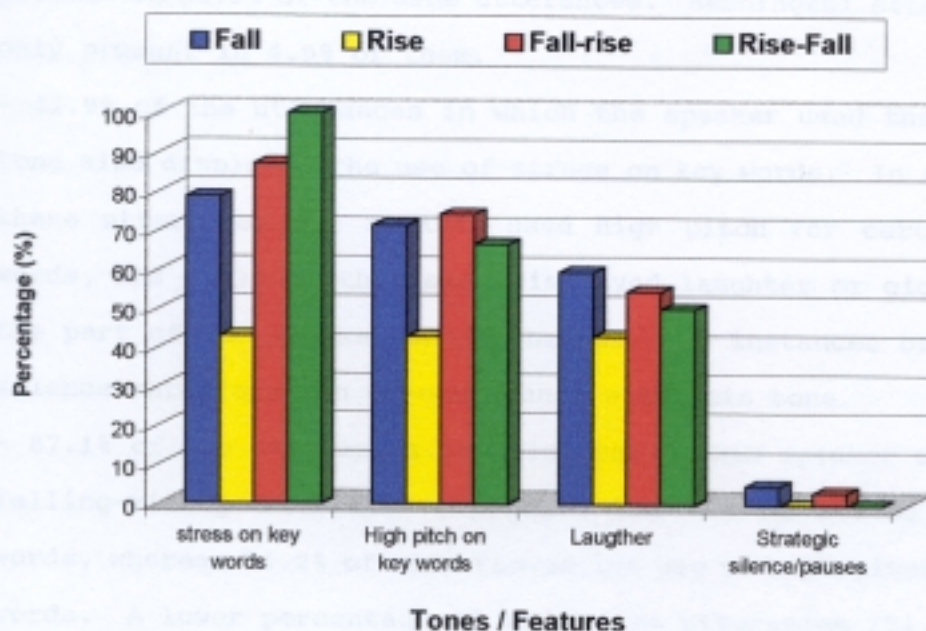


Fig. 6g . Comparative bar chart

The cross-tabulation of the variables (table 6.5 and Fig. 6g) leads the researcher to make the following observations:

- 78.6% of the ironic utterances in which the speaker used the falling tone displayed also a use of stress on key words. 71.5% of the same utterances contained key words uttered on a higher pitch than the rest of the words of the utterance. Laughter was present in 60.9% of the same utterances. Meaningful silence was only present in 4.9% of them.
- 42.9% of the utterances in which the speaker used the rising tone also displayed the use of stress on key words. In 42.9% of these utterances the speaker used high pitch for certain key words, and 42.9% of them also displayed laughter or giggles on the part of the speaker and/or hearer. No instances of ironic silence were found in co-occurrence with this tone.
- 87.1% of the utterances in which the ironic speaker used the falling-rising tone also displayed the use of stress on key words, whereas 74.2% of them showed the use of high pitch on key words. A lower percentage of these same utterances (54.5%) co-occurred with laughter or giggles, and the lowest percentage of co-occurrence belongs to ironic meaningful silence (3.2%).
- All the instances (100%) of ironic utterances in which the speaker used the rising-falling tone also contained the use of stress on key words. Only in 66.6% of them was high pitch used for key words, and, in 50% of these utterances, the speakers laughed during or after the ironic comment. No occurrences (0%) of ironic silence were registered in connection with this tone.

The foregoing information leads us to the following

conclusions:

- All the features studied can co-occur with any of the tones, except for ironic silence, which, in the instances analysed here did not appear in relation to the rise and the rise-fall. In any case, ironic silence -though a possible variable- does not seem to be a frequent prosodic feature in connection with irony.
- Stress on key words occurs more frequently in connection with the rise-fall, the fall-rise and the fall, and not so frequently with the rise.
- High pitch tends to be used more frequently in connection with the fall and the fall-rise. Its appearance in connection with the rise-fall has been less frequent, and even less frequent in connection with the rise.
- Laughter and/or giggles appear more frequently in those utterances in which the speaker uses the falling tone and the fall-rise, and less frequently in those in which the rise-fall or the rise is used.
- Except for the case of silence, there are no remarkable differences that could tell us that one prosodic feature is more important than any other when it comes to conveying ironic meanings. This seems to be in agreement with the hypothesis underlying this study, i.e. that there is no specific "tone" for ironic utterances and that other prosodic features can be used in combination with the tones to yield the so-called "ironic tone of voice". In some cases, as was the case with examples n° 40 and 77 (see Appendix 1, a), "tone" was the only prosodic feature considered necessary by the speaker to accompany his ironic

utterance. In these two particular cases, the falling-rising tone was used, a fact that might lead us to conclude that when the fall-rise is used, no other feature is necessary to understand the irony. But the evidence of the data rejects this conclusion, for, in most cases in which the fall-rise was used, there were other prosodic features working with it. Besides, there is another case in which the only prosodic feature used by the speaker is tone, namely, example n° 66, and the tone used here is the fall, not the fall-rise. However, there might be other prosodic clues given by the speaker in this utterance but not registered in the transcription of the corpus (I have already noted that there are some features like nasalisation or breathy voice that are not marked in the LLC but that could be irony markers).

In any case, the results of this survey do not allow the researcher to conclude that intonation is a sufficient condition to determine whether a given utterance is ironic or not. The results better tell us that different combinations of different prosodic features are used by different ironic speakers in different situations. The network of relationships and combinations is complex, and it ultimately depends upon other features of the whole context of the utterance. Thus, syntactic, semantic, social and prosodic contexts work together to conform the whole pragmatic event of ironic communication.

In order to have a knowledge of the tendencies of combination of the different features studied here, a statistical analysis of the possible combinations was made. All the possible

combinations with their number of occurrences in the ironic examples studied in this survey are shown in Appendix 1, b. This statistical analysis tells us that the most frequent combinations of prosodic features for cases of verbal irony are the following (in order of importance)

- 1- Fall-rise + Stress on key words + High Pitch on key words + Laughter
- 2- Fall + Stress on key w. + High Pitch on k.w. + Laughter
- 3- Fall + Stress on k.w. + High Pitch on k.w.
- 4- Fall-rise + Stress on k.w. + High Pitch on k.w.

As can be seen, the statistical analysis of the combinations shows the tendency of ironic utterances towards the use of tones Fall and Fall-rise together with stress on key words, high pitch on key words and laughter or stress and high pitch only, combinations that display the highest number of occurrences. Other combinations are also possible, but not so frequent, which seems, consequently, to indicate precisely what was suspected at the beginning of this survey, namely, that it is not only the tone used which determines the "ironic tone of voice", but also other prosodic features like high pitch or stress on key words.

All the foregoing suggests that prosodic features are an important part of the pragmatic meaning of ironic utterances, which seems to be a sensible conclusion, but, immediately after all this analysis, another secondary research question naturally arises: If prosodic features are important for the expression and interpretation of irony, what about *written* verbal irony? In other words, can we say that written ironic discourse has

attached to it certain prosodic features that distinguish it from other types of discourse? I shall try to answer, or, at least, to discuss this question in the following section.

6.5 Prosodic features and written verbal irony

On a first and unreflected view, it may seem absurd and contradictory to speak of the "prosodic features" of written discourse. However, some studies seem to suggest that this is not so absurd. Keith Allan notes that "in writing, prosody is somewhat grossly represented by punctuation, underlining, capitalization, italization, etc." (1986: 58). Moreover, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that, when reading any type of discourse, the context will help the reader to imagine and/or deduce "how" this piece of discourse should be read aloud, i.e., which prosodic features to use. Crystal & Davy write about "the phonology that underlies the written form of newspaper reporting", and, although they consider that it is not normally stylistically significant, they acknowledge that "certain 'auditory effects' can be found, which presumably reverberate mentally" (1969: 180).

In a study contrasting discourse modes or "genres", Johns-Lewis (1986) examined pitch fundamental frequency (Fo) tendencies in three discourse modes: reading, acting and conversation. The evidence from this study showed that long-term pitch characteristics are significantly different in the three discourse modes selected: the Fo band occupied by the three

discourse modes is narrowest for conversation and widest for acting, with reading aloud being intermediate between the two (1986: 212). For the purposes of the research question concerning written irony, this study is not very revealing, but it makes us aware of the fact that when reading a written text aloud, the pitch of the voice tends to be higher than in normal conversation.

El-Menoufy (1988) explains that in normal conversation the selection of the final lexical word in a tone group as tonic is the "unmarked" normal or neutral selection. On the contrary, the selection of a non-final lexical word or a non-lexical word as tonic is referred to as the "marked" selection, and is interpreted as the selection that indicates a presupposition relation (1988: 13). In the research done herein, it has been observed that the ironic writer may use different strategies to make the reader consider a given word as important and prominent, and, in this way, he may make the reader "shift" the tonic syllable "mentally" from the last lexical word in the tone group (unmarked position) to some other lexical or non-lexical word. In many of the newspaper articles examined, for example, the word carrying the heaviest ironic load is put between inverted commas. Crystal & Davy (1969) point out that inverted commas in the language of newspaper reporting are used for a variety of functions, one of them being to spotlight certain terms to which the author wants to give special prominence (1969: 179). This fact can be seen in the following comment made by Josh Young in the Sunday Telegraph, in which he writes about a religious sect

called "Scientology":

- [1] <<The Church of Scientology, founded by the late science-fiction writer, L. Ron Hubbard, has no God and its only declared goal is personal happiness. It teaches that humans are actually "thethans", creatures from another planet banished to earth 75 million years ago by their cruel ruler. They can only free themselves from evil influences by taking expansive courses of "enlightenment" invented by Hubbard -courses which made him a multi-millionaire.>>

(NA, January 15, 1994: 2)

The use of the inverted commas for the word "enlightenment" seems to have changed the tonic syllable from the final lexical word in the tone group (which would be *Hubbard*) to the previous lexical word (*enlightenment*). According to El-Menoufy, the post-tonic items are given and recoverable, as is the case here with *Hubbard*, who was mentioned before at the beginning of the article. The word "enlightenment" is thus the one that is made prominent, in this case with an ironic intention, because it is evident that the writer does not think that those courses involve any enlightenment at all. The fact that these courses have made Hubbard a multi-millionaire reinforces the irony intended by the writer, if we consider that religion or church is something that is, or at least should be, associated with spirituality.

El-Menoufy explains that the unmarked predictable selection for the tonic syllable is the one that one would choose if one was asked to read out an isolated sentence, i.e., one that is out of context (1988: 13), which logically seems to suggest that when the context is available, the reader may be led to

change the tonic item or focus^a, depending on the meanings conveyed, even when no inverted commas, italics or any other explicit indications are given by the writer.

The writer of ironic discourse, then, may use a great number of strategies to make his reader understand the intended meaning, one of which can be the use of inverted commas, bold type, italics, etc., and this may also give clues as to the intonation or prosodic features to be used by the reader. Another possible strategy for a writer is the choice of vocabulary. Carter (1988) tries to show "the degrees of neutrality or bias which are inscribed in the choice of words which reporters make" (1988: 8). Carter explains that, many times, journalists deviate from the use of "core" vocabulary (i.e., "the most normal, basic and simple words available to a language user, those elements in the lexical network of language which are unmarked" (1988: 9)) in order to show they are neither neutral nor objective. The use of non-core words may thus clearly show an attitude on the part of the writer. If we make a connection of this information with ironic discourse, it follows that when a writer wants to show sarcasm or irony to express a given attitude, he may include non-core words in his writing to that effect. As to the connection of this issue to prosodic features, it might be hypothesised that the use of a non-core word may make the reader direct his attention to that word and, consequently, give some kind of prosodic prominence to

^a Although the focus does not always coincide with the tonic syllable. See Martínez Caro (1995), Dick (1989), Siervieraka (1991).

it. More descriptive work is needed to test such a hypothesis, and it is not the intention of this study to go deeper into such an analysis. However, I consider it appropriate to include here two examples of written irony in which the strategy of using non-core vocabulary is found. The choice of some non-core words made by Russell in the following passage is made on purpose, in order to show his derogatory attitude towards religion:

- [2] <<I should not wish to be taught in earnest only when I am solemn. There are many things that seem to me important to be said, but not best said in a portentous tone of voice. Indeed, it has become increasingly evident to me that portentousness is often, though not always, a device for warding off too close scrutiny. I cannot believe in "sacred" truths. Whatever one may believe to be true, one ought to be able to convey without any apparatus of Sunday sanctification.>>

(BR, 1958: 100)

The use of non-core words and phrases such as "portentous/ness" or "apparatus of Sunday sanctification" helps the reader identify Russell's ironic tone. He is also making use of the inverted commas strategy with the word "sacred", which may make it become tonic, and, consequently, a marked option, whereas the unmarked option would place the tonic syllable on the word "truths". In this way, the reader will readily understand that what is sacred for other people is not sacred for Russell, and consequently he is mocking and being ironic about such an idea.

In the following excerpt from *The Sunday Times*, Jonathan Marolis shows his scepticism in connection with the so-called "intelligent buildings". He has previously stated that people get confused in such buildings, for, although they are

designed to be slaves to man, "it is sometimes not clear who is boss". He then explains that once he tried to switch on a light, but he pressed a red button and "succeeded in calling the fire brigade". Finally, he notes:

- [3] <<As I approached a chair-type device with some trepidation, wondering if it would turn out to be connected to the cooker, or the police station, I asked a university professor who was showing me round, what it was. "That" he pronounced gravely, "is a normal chair".>>

(NA, November 5, 1993: 2)

The language used by this journalist is biased. The fact that he is not being objective with the subject of his writing can be noticed by analysing the strategies he uses. One of these strategies is employing non-core vocabulary, as is the case with "a chair-type device", which will surely call the attention of the reader, and, consequently, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the reader will give some kind of prominence to this noun-phrase, a prominence that would not be present if the word had been merely "chair". The irony of this passage has also been attained through the strategy of "exaggeration" or "overstatement", which has already been discussed in chapter 5.

The above discussion and analysis of examples have led me to conclude that, even though prosodic features are normally thought of in connection with spoken discourse, they are not absent in written discourse. Writers have developed strategies to mark these features in their writing, and in certain conditions these strategies can also be used to give an ironic tone to the text.

I find it suitable to close this section by quoting Booth (1974) in one observation made in his book *A Rhetoric of Irony*:

<<In spoken ironies, especially in conversation, we are accustomed to catching a variety of clues that are not in themselves ironic -direct nudges of the elbow and winks of the eye. In written irony the same kind of nudge is sometimes given -often to the distress of readers who prefer to work things out on their own.>>

(1974: 53)

6.6 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter, I have tried to clarify and analyse the relationship between irony and some prosodic features that accompany the phenomenon. Twenty texts from the London Lund Corpus (containing sixty-four sub-texts) have been examined, in which 86 (eighty-six) instances of ironic discourse were found. An account of the different prosodic features accompanying these examples has been made, as well as an analysis of the pragmatic meanings involved in the use of such prosodic phenomena.

The results of the analysis showed that the most frequently used tones for ironic utterances were the Fall and the Fall-rise, although the Rise and the Rise-fall also occurred in a lower percentage of the cases. This preponderance of the Fall and the Fall-rise proved to be valid also for non-ironic utterances (after the statistical analysis of the sample of non-ironic discourse), which could then mean that the preponderance of these two tones in ironic utterances does not say anything in

particular of such utterances, for they do not differ from the normal tendency of all utterances in English. However, the percentage of Fall-rises used in non-ironic discourse proved to be much lower than that of ironic discourse, a figure that shows that there is a certain tendency for ironic speakers to use this tone more frequently. This is basically the conclusion drawn from applying the chi-square (χ^2) statistical test: there exists a difference between ironic and non-ironic discourse with respect to frequency of use of the different tones.

But this study has also thrown some light on certain prosodic features other than tone, which I believe helped to clarify to a certain extent what the elements of the so-called "ironic tone of voice" are. These other features analysed were: *stress* on key words, *high pitch* on key words, *laughter/giggles*, and *meaningful silence/pauses*. The statistical analysis of the possibilities of combinations of these features with the different tones showed that there is a tendency for ironic speakers to use the tones Fall and Fall-rise together with stress on key words, high pitch on key words and laughter, or to use the same tones only with stress and pitch on key words. These combinations displayed the highest number of occurrences. Other combinations proved to be sometimes used by ironic speakers (see Appendix 1, b), though not with so much frequency.

All the foregoing suggests that, as had been suspected at the beginning of the survey, it is not only the tone used which determines the "ironic tone of voice", but also other prosodic features, and all of them together contribute to the

interpretation of the ironic utterances as such. No one of these features can be labelled as the prosodic feature exclusively occurring in ironic utterances; rather, it seems more sensible to speak of a certain "collaboration" of two or more of them in most cases. The co-occurrence of these features is neither completely predictable nor random. It varies depending on the situation, the speakers, etc..

After the survey carried out in this chapter, it can be stated that prosodic features constitute one more of the strategies the ironic speaker has at his disposition in order to make his point, and that a varied and very rich network of relationships can be woven among these features. This network is surely rather intricate in most cases; I have tried to discover and to describe only some of the possible combinations. My intention has been to find a clearer explanation for the function and frequency of use of certain features which proved to be present in the examples of verbal irony in the corpus.

It is important to note that not all possible prosodic features have been quantified and analysed in this survey. Cases of nasalisation or breathy voice (which have also been identified by some linguists as irony markers) for example, have not been counted, simply because these features are not marked in the corpus used for the survey. I understand that the features not studied here may be as important as the ones that have been studied, and I am conscious of the fact that all these features are also many times correlated with such non-verbal factors as use of broad facial expressions and gestures, as well as with

kinesic proximity and touching during talk. I agree with Tannen in that "any device can be used to varying degrees, and each person's style is made up of a unique combination of devices" (1984: 146), although, as I have been able to confirm after the statistical analysis, certain tendencies in these combinations can be identified.

Finally, a brief discussion about the "implicit" presence of prosodic features in written ironic discourse was made. The general conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion is that the ironic writer generally gives his reader clues as to how his writing should be read aloud, be it by means of "graphic" elements (such as inverted commas, italisation, etc.), by the use of non-core words or expressions, or by means of other features of the context that can help the reader know which word or words should be made prominent.

I hope this chapter has helped to see another aspect of irony in a clearer light, and to understand that prosodic features are another of the "tools" or strategies that ironic speakers can dispose of. These and other strategies have been found and scrutinised all throughout the chapters written hitherto, but they still seem to form part of a "chaos". I shall try hereinafter to organise this "chaos" by classifying the different types of verbal irony (chapter 7), by proposing a taxonomy of ironic strategies (chapter 8), and, later, by analysing the functions fulfilled by these strategies and proposing a taxonomy of such functions (chapter 9). All this, I believe, will present a clearer approach to the problem.

ABRIR CAPÍTULO 7 TOMO I





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Chapter 7: TYPES OF IRONY RESULTING FROM THE
DIFFERENT APPROACHES DISCUSSED IN
PREVIOUS CHAPTERS: QUALITATIVE AND
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

<<The irony of irony is that we can often recognize ironic situations and language even though we have a terrible time trying to define irony.>>

R. Gibbs & J. O'Brien, *Psychological Aspects of Irony Understanding*

7.1 Introduction and aims

My general aim all throughout this investigation has been to clarify and, therefore, understand in a more profound way the phenomenon of verbal irony within the field of linguistic pragmatics. I have presented in previous chapters different approaches to verbal irony that allow the researcher to look at it from different perspectives and to consider different elements which are part of it. The intention in this new chapter is twofold. On the one hand, I will try to make a recapitulation of all the types of verbal irony that have been discussed or touched on in some way or another throughout this piece of work, providing, in some cases, new types that arose as a consequence of scrutinising the points of view discussed. On the other hand, I will also provide numerical data of these types as they occur in each of the corpora used for this investigation. This quantitative analysis will be hypotheses-oriented, i.e., it will be carried out with the aim of testing hypotheses n° 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Hypothesis 5 will be quantitatively tested in

chapter 8, in relation to the strategies in the taxonomy proposed. Hypothesis 10 will not be quantitatively tested here, for, as was explained in chapter 5, there seem to be many variables involved which cannot be controlled in this piece of research. Hypothesis 11 has already been tested in chapter 6.

The types of irony discussed in this chapter have served as preliminary data for the later elaboration of the taxonomy of pragmatic strategies proposed in chapter 8, in which each of these types is reflected in one or some of the strategies used by speakers and users of ironic discourse.

I now turn to both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the above mentioned types.

7.2 General types of verbal irony found in the corpora regarding the different approaches discussed in previous chapters

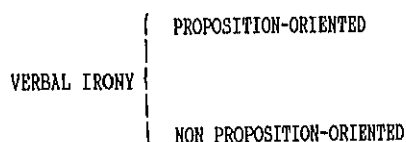
7.2.1 Types of verbal irony within a classical framework: Testing Research Hypothesis n°1

As was specified in chapter 2, classical/traditional approaches to the study of irony have always been proposition-oriented, i.e., they put forward the hypothesis that all cases of verbal irony convey the opposite of the literal proposition. It was also shown in chapter 2, by means of the evidence of some of the examples in the corpora used for this research, that this correspondence of "opposite proposition/verbal irony" was not always valid; in many cases a speaker can be ironic and not mean the opposite. Thus, there seems to be no one-to-one

correspondence between verbal irony and "meaning the opposite proposition to the literal one". The set of correspondences seems to be much more complex, as I have shown and will try to show with even more detail in this and the next two chapters.

In agreement with the data analysed in the corpora, when looking at verbal irony from the classical/traditional perspective, two main kinds of verbal irony readily strike the researcher as prominent. These two types are illustrated in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Types of verbal irony found in the corpora in relation to traditional approaches



To avoid repetition, I shall not present or analyse any examples of these two kinds here. Several examples have already been discussed in 2.4, where it was shown that, although many instances of verbal irony fulfil the traditional expectations, many other instances do not, which led me to the initial characterisation of the phenomenon by means of the dychotomy *proposition-oriented/non proposition-oriented*.

7.2.1.1 Quantitative analysis of the proposition-oriented/non proposition-oriented categories in the corpora studied

The numerical and statistical confirmation of this

fact, which also entails the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n°1 (see Introduction), can be appreciated in tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6.

Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, & 7.5: Number and percentage of occurrence of instances of the proposition-oriented (PO) and non proposition-oriented (Non-PO) variables in the corpora studied.

A) *Spoken corpora*

a) LLC (7.1)

	<i>PO</i>	<i>Non-PO</i>
<i>N° of occurrences (out of 86)</i>	16	70
<i>Percentage (%)</i>	18.60	81.40

b) GG (7.2)

	<i>PO</i>	<i>Non-PO</i>
<i>N° of occurrences (out of 84)</i>	16	68
<i>(%)</i>	19.05	80.95

c) YM (7.3)

	<i>PO</i>	<i>Non-PO</i>
<i>N° of occurrences (out of 55)</i>	16	39
<i>(%)</i>	29.09	70.91

B) Written Corpora

a) BR (7.4)

	PO	Non-PO
N ^o of occurrences (out of 46)	16	30
(%)	34.78	65.22

b) NA (7.5)

	PO	Non-PO
N ^o of occurrences (out of 80)	20	60
(%)	25	75

Table 7.6: Total number and percentage of occurrence of the PO and non-PO variables in relation to the total number of instances of verbal irony analysed

	PO	Non-PO
N ^o of occurrences (out of 351)	84	267
(%)	23.93	76.07

7.2.1.1.1 Discussion of the results

The results of this analysis of frequencies tells us that in, all the corpora studied, the number of instances of verbal irony in which the speaker/writer did not mean the opposite proposition was greater than the number of such instances in which s/he meant it. The percentage of occurrences for cases of verbal irony in which the speaker/writer did not mean the opposite of his/her literal proposition is, in all

cases, much higher than that of its "opposite proposition" counterpart: 81.40% for the LLC, 80.95% for *The Golden Girls* television series, 70.91% for the *Yes Minister* television series, 65.22% for B. Russell's argumentative prose and 75% for the newspaper articles. These results confirm the argument put forward in Hypothesis n° 1, i.e. that not all cases of verbal irony are intended to mean the opposite of the literal proposition, leaving the ways of expression of verbal irony open to a richer variety of possibilities among which "opposite proposition" is only one of them. Table 7.6 shows the average percentage for all the corpora considered together, which tells that in 76.07% of the cases in which the speaker chose verbal irony as a strategy, he did not choose the "opposite proposition" alternative.

The statistical Median Test was applied to these data, and the results (see appendix 4, hypothesis 1) confirmed the hypothesis that the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented cases of verbal irony is greater (in all the samples) than that of the proposition-oriented ones. Likewise, the statistical chi-squared test was applied to check whether the relative frequency of the proposition-oriented and non proposition-oriented instances of irony is the same for all the corpora, and the results showed that the null hypothesis can be accepted, i.e., the relative frequency is the same; there is no difference as to the relative frequencies in the different corpora. Figures 7a and 7b illustrate the data and results discussed herein.

Fig. 7a. Frequencies of occurrence of the proposition-oriented & non proposition-oriented variables

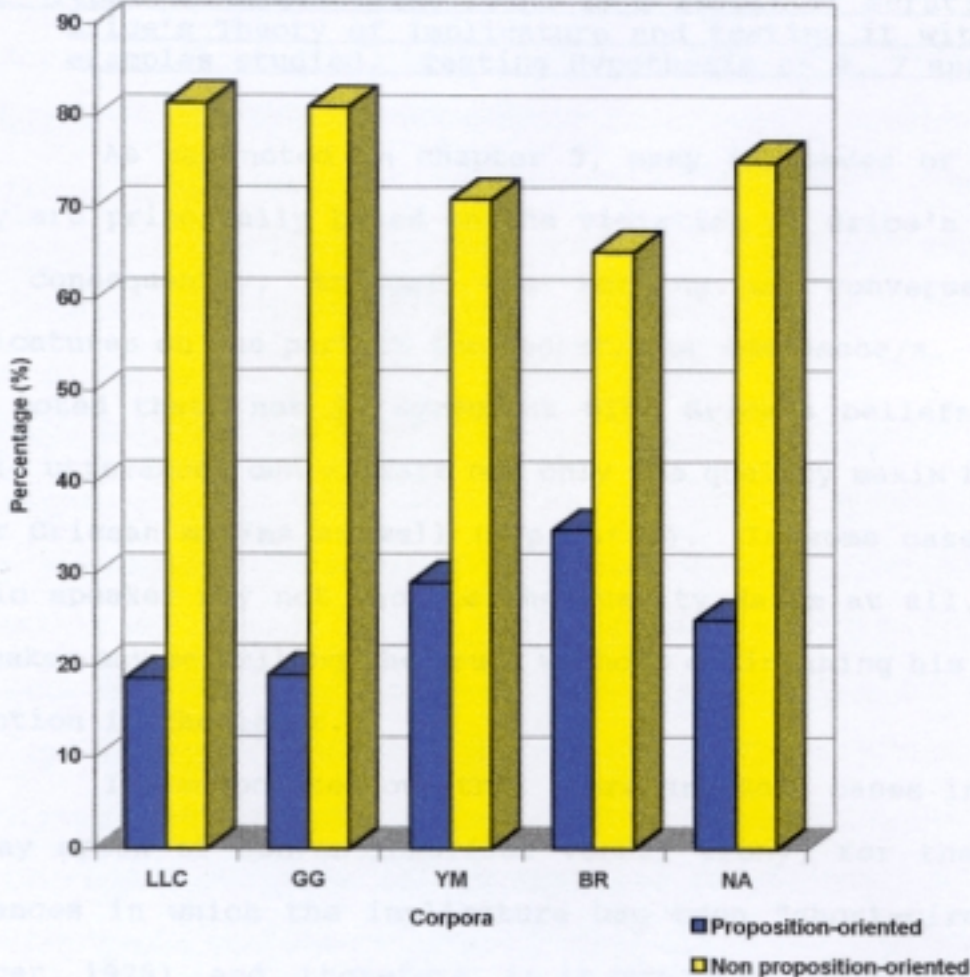
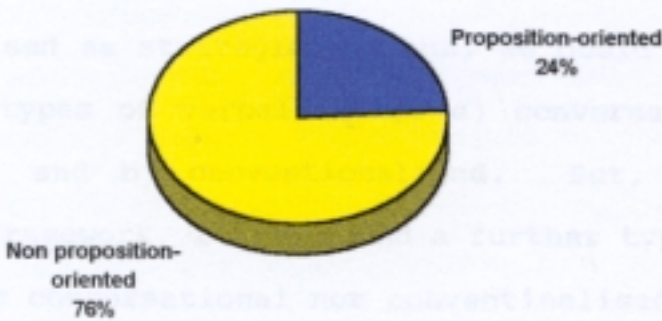


Fig. 7b. Total percentage of the proposition-oriented & non proposition-oriented variables



7.2.2 Types of verbal irony found as a result of scrutinizing Grice's Theory of Implicature and testing it with the examples studied. Testing Hypothesis n° 2, 7 and 9

As was noted in chapter 3, many instances of verbal irony are principally based on the violation of Grice's maxims and, consequently, trigger the working of conversational implicatures on the part of the hearer/s or addressee/s. It was also noted that, not in agreement with Grice's beliefs, many ironic utterances can violate not only the quality maxim but the other Gricean maxims as well (Hyp. n° 7). In some cases, the ironic speaker may not violate the Quality Maxim at all, i.e., a speaker may be telling the truth without diminishing his ironic intention in the least.

I also pointed out that there are some cases in which we may speak of *conventionalised* verbal irony, for these are instances in which the implicature has been "short-circuited" (Morgan, 1978), and, therefore, it is now never cancellable (see 3.3.1). At this step, it was found out that there are not only some words or expressions that have been conventionalised as ironic, but also some *pragmatic strategies* which are not associated to any words in particular but that have been conventionalised as strategies. Thus, we could hitherto speak of two main types of verbal irony: a) conversational or non-conventional, and b) conventionalised. But, interestingly, within this framework, I have found a further type, which seems to be neither conversational nor conventionalised. My argument here is that there is a type of verbal irony that is implicature-

free but that cannot be said to be conventionalised. The irony in these cases is derived from the normal conventional implicatures of the words used, but these words or expressions are not conventionally used as ironic every time they are used. In other words, the ironic meaning is worked out via *conventional* implicatures but not through a conventionalised or "short-circuited" ironic expression or strategy. An example of this third type of verbal irony would be Socrates' famous statement: "I only know I know nothing" or Martin's (1992) example: "Our friends are always there when they need us". In both cases, the speakers are telling the truth, and they do not seem to be violating any of the other three maxims. Then we can speak neither of conversational nor of conventionalised verbal irony. There is, however, an implied contradiction which simply derives from the conventional meanings of the words used and shows the witticism of the speaker or the writer. In the first case there is an implicit contradiction based on the meaning of the verb "to know", for if one knows nothing, it sounds contradictory to say that one knows something, even that one knows nothing. This also sounds like a tongue twister, but it is another way of confirming the richness of witty possibilities a speaker can attain through verbal irony. In the second case, as was explained in 5.2.1, there is an implied contradiction between the pronouns that are expected to be used in the subordinate clause ("we" and "them") and those which are actually used ("they" and "us"). These examples would therefore conform a third type of verbal irony that I shall call "Implicature-free" (by which I mean "free of

conversational implicatures", but not of conventional ones). All the foregoing is summarised and illustrated in figure 7.2.

VERBAL IRONY	1- Conversational	Violating Quality Maxim Violating Quantity Maxim Violating Manner Maxim Violating Relevance Maxim
	2- Conventionalised	(short-circuited implicature)
	3- Implicature-free	

Figure 7.2: Types of verbal irony found in relation to Grice's Theory of Implicature

Many examples of type 1 have already been provided, especially in chapter 5, but, as a reminder, I will discuss here one more example taken from the *Yes Minister* corpus. In the following exchange between Humphrey and Hacker (the Minister of Administrative Affairs), Hacker's reply is sarcastic and violates the Quality Maxim, for it can easily be inferred that Hacker believes and knows that both of them have secrets from each other. Hacker has now a secret plan, which he has devised as a means of taking revenge on Humphrey's continuous concealing attitude:

[1] Humphrey: Now Minister, you'll forgive me about saying this, but I'm beginning to suspect you're concealing something from me.

Hacker: Oh surely you and I have no secrets from each other, have we, Humphrey?

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: *The Writing on the Wall*)

Hacker is not telling the truth, for they both know that the opposite proposition is true: they both keep secrets from each

other, and Hacker wants Humphrey to see that he is no fool by using the prototypical strategy for verbal irony: "Use an utterance whose proposition is opposite to the one meant or intended". Obviously, Hacker is violating the Quality Maxim here.

As an example for type 2, let us analyse this dialogue, where Rose is very upset because the grief counselling centre of which she is a member has been closed:

[2]

Rose: I'm fine. Don't worry about me. It's all those other people.

Blanche: Was it some kind of accident? No, don't tell me. If I get upset I'll eat.

Dorothy: What happened, Rose?

Rose: They closed the centre.

Blanche: Not your grief counselling centre?

Dorothy: No, Blanche. The Kennedy Space Centre. She wanted to be the first Lutheran on the moon.

(GG, 1991: 18)

The last adjacency pair between Blanche and Dorothy displays a typical example of one of the conventionalised ironic strategies discussed in 3.3.1 and 8.4.1 (A30): "Reply to a stupid question with an even more stupid answer". It is evident that Dorothy's response is not true, and it would be ridiculous to think so. In this way she is showing how ridiculous Blanche's question was. Nobody would ever take this answer in its propositional value in this context, which means that there is no possible cancellation of the implicature worked out, namely, that Blanche's question

was stupid and unnecessary.

To illustrate type 3 (implicature-free verbal irony), I would like to refer to two examples. The first one displays an instance of implicature-free verbal irony in the words of Humphrey (in the television series *Yes Minister*). After Humphrey made a proposal in which it was evident that he wanted to cheat the English people, the following dialogue takes place:

[3]

Hacker: But that's phoney. It's cheating, it's dishonest, it's just cheating with figures; putting a wool over people's eyes.

Humphrey: A government press release, in fact.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: *The Economy Drive*)

Humphrey is telling the truth when he says that, in fact, a government press release is about cheating people, and there is no further implicature to be worked out. But there is an implied contradiction here between what a government press release really is and what it should be, and this is what triggers the ironic interpretation. There is no violation of any of the Maxims, for Humphrey is saying what he considers to be true, he is being relevant, he is giving neither more nor less information than required and he is being neither obscure nor ambiguous. The conventional meaning of the phrase "in fact" is crucial for the interpretation of this utterance as ironic, for it depicts a situation that bears an inherent contradiction: a government press release should tell the people the truth about the policy and decisions taken by the government, but Humphrey's utterance conventionally implies the opposite.

[4] The second example to illustrate implicature-free irony has been taken from Russell's argumentative prose, in one of his well-known criticisms of some aspects of society. The criticism here is directed to the love-hate paradox existing -according to his view- in all human beings:

[4]

<<We love those who hate our enemies, and if we had no enemies there would be very few people whom we should love.>>

(BR, 1958: 23)

The reader of this statement does not have to work out any implicatures. Russell is here expressing his ideas and beliefs sincerely, but it is simply the conventional meanings of the words used that cause the ironic interpretation. Russell is playing here with opposite meanings that express a paradox, and this, in turn, offers him the possibility of criticising a trait of human nature that he looks down on . It seems contradictory to love someone who hates some other person simply because that person he hates is our enemy, and it also seems a contradictory idea to love no one simply because we have no enemies. The logical and non-contradictory idea would be to think that we would love more people if we had no enemies. Russell has made a very clever choice of words and, in so doing, he has been successful at handling this implicature-free type of irony. Although, as we can see, this type exists, it does not seem to be the most frequent, as will be shown in the quantitative analysis that follows.

7.2.2.1 Quantitative analysis of the conversational, conventionalised and implicature-free categories

The number and percentage of occurrences of each of the types discussed in 7.2.2 is shown in tables 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11.

Tables 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, and 7.11: Number of occurrences and percentage of the conversational, conventionalised and implicature-free types of verbal irony found in the corpora

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC (7.7)

	Conversat.	Convent.	Implic.-free
n° of occ. (out of 86)	64	0	22
%	74.4	0	25.6

b) GG (7.8)

	Conversat.	Convent.	Implic.-free
n° of occ. (out of 84)	65	13	6
%	77.38	15.48	7.14

c) YM (7.9)

	Conversat.	Convent.	Implic.-free
n° of occ. (out of 55)	40	1	14
%	72.73	1.81	25.46

B) Written Corpora

a) BR (7.10)

	<i>Conversat.</i>	<i>Convent.</i>	<i>Implic.-free</i>
<i>n° of occ. (out of 46)</i>	37	2	7
<i>%</i>	80.43	4.35	15.22

b) NA (7.11)

	<i>Conversat.</i>	<i>Convent.</i>	<i>Implic.-free</i>
<i>n° of occ. (out of 80)</i>	67	0	13
<i>%</i>	83.75	0	16.25

Table 7.12: Percentage of occurrence of the Conversational, Conventionalised and Implicature free variables with respect to the total number of ironic instances in the corpora analysed

	<i>Conversat.</i>	<i>Convent.</i>	<i>Implic.-free</i>
<i>n° of occ. (out of 351)</i>	272	16	62
<i>%</i>	77.78	4.56	17.66

7.2.2.1.1 Discussion of the results

The data in the previous tables show a marked tendency for ironic utterances to trigger conversational implicatures:

74.4% in LLC, 77.38% in GG, 72.73% in YM, 80.43% in BR and 83.75% in NA, are the percentages for the **conversational** type of verbal irony. However, the figures also tell us that in a considerable number of cases the irony used was implicature-free, and, in other cases, the type of verbal irony used was expressed by means of a conventionalised ironic expression or strategy. Both in tables 7.6 and 7.10 it can be seen that no examples of conventionalised verbal irony were found, but several (25.6% and 16.25% respectively) were found of implicature-free irony. Thus, in all the corpora analysed, there is evidence that conversational irony is not the only possibility available: sometimes the ironic speaker does not need to resort to conversational implicatures, be it because s/he is using an expression or strategy that is now generally accepted as ironic (and, consequently, the implicature has been short-circuited) or be it because the irony derives from the conventional meanings of the words used. All this argumentation, which is based on the observed data and results, seems to lead the researcher to accept the argument put forward in hypothesis n° 2, i.e, that verbal irony can be conveyed not only through conversational implicature but also through conventional implicature.

The statistical Kruskal-Wallis test was applied here to see if there were any significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of these three types of verbal irony, and the results show that, in effect, the differences among the three types as regards frequency of occurrence are important and significant (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 2). In addition, the

chi-squared test was carried out, in order to state whether the relative frequencies of occurrence of the three categories is the same for all the corpora. The results do not support the null hypothesis, i.e., the relative frequency of these three categories is not the same for all the corpora, which suggests that the use of one or the other category might depend on the type of discourse used (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 2)

The results discussed herein are illustrated in figures 7c and 7d.

Fig. 7c. Frequencies of occurrence of the conversational, conventionalised & implicature-free variables

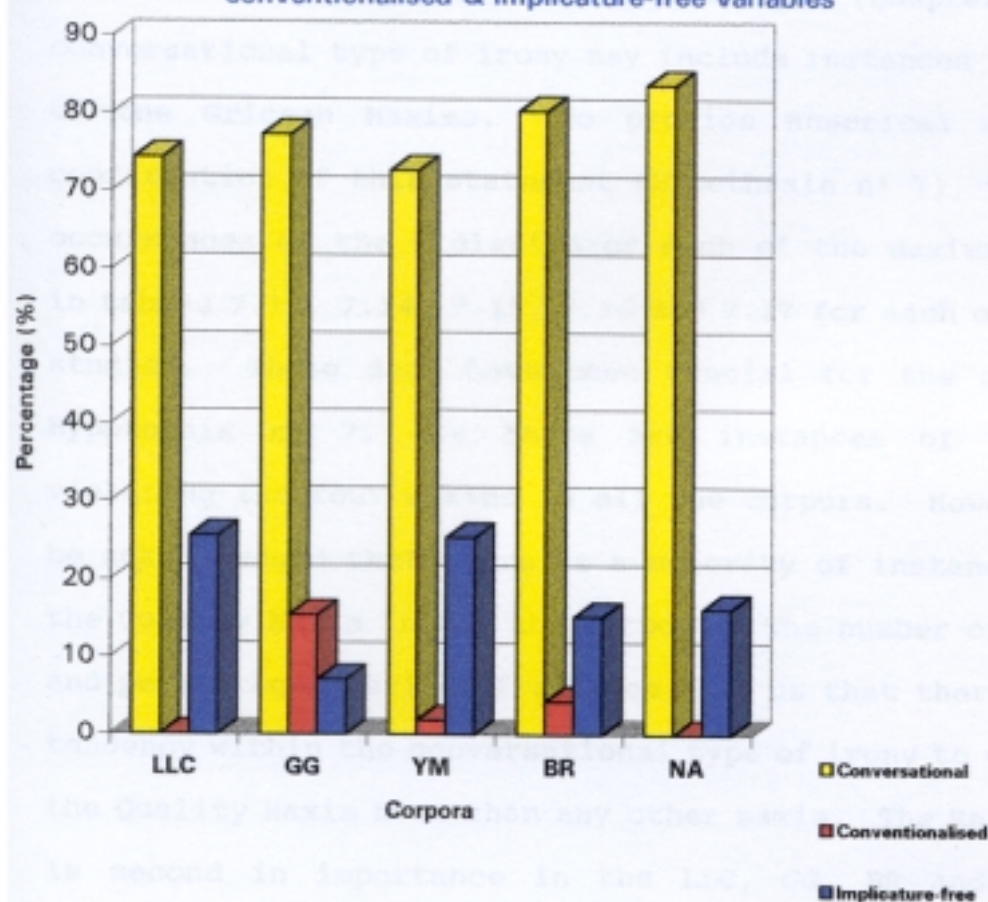
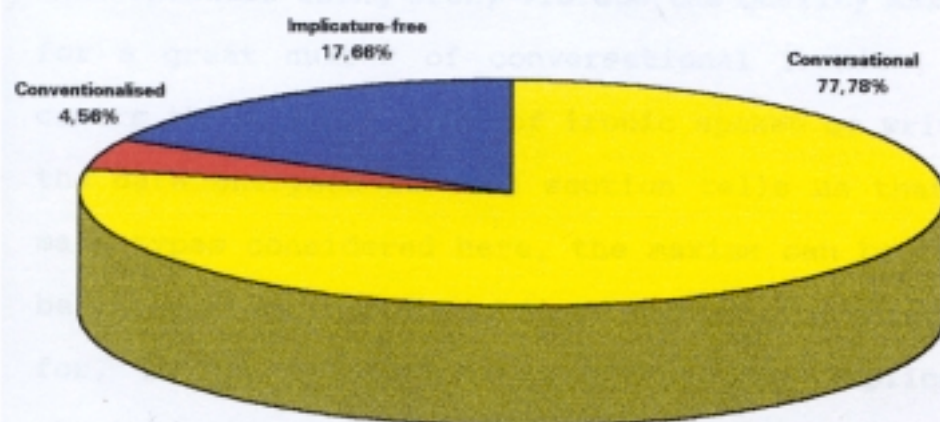


Fig. 7d. Total occurrence of the conversational, conventionalised & implicature-free variables



It has already been pointed out (chapter 5) that the conversational type of irony may include instances violating any of the Gricean Maxims. To provide numerical data for the confirmation of this statement (Hypothesis n° 7), the number of occurrences of the violation of each of the maxims is provided in tables 7.13, 7.14, 7.15, 7.16 and 7.17 for each of the corpora studied. These data have been crucial for the acceptance of Hypothesis n° 7, for there are instances of verbal irony violating the four maxims in all the corpora. However, it must be acknowledged that there is a majority of instances violating the Quality Maxim in all the corpora. The number of occurrences and percentages derived from them tell us that there is a marked tendency within the conversational type of irony to violate/flout the Quality Maxim more than any other maxim. The Relevance Maxim is second in importance in the LLC, GG, BR and NA corpora, whereas it is the Manner Maxim that is in second place in the YM corpus. Therefore, Grice's (and Brown & Levinson's) argument that speakers using irony violate the Quality Maxim is confirmed for a great number of conversational ironies, but in no way covers the whole picture of ironic spoken or written discourse: the data analysed in this section tells us that, of the three main types considered here, the maxims can be strictly said to be violated in only one of them, namely, the conversational type, for, in the conventionalised type, the implicature has been short-circuited (as explained in 7.22 and 3.3.1 above), and, in the implicature-free type, the speaker does not have to work out any conversational implicatures. Even more, within the

conversational type, the instances violating the Quality Maxim represent one of four possibilities. These are conditions which give evidence of the fact that the violation of the Quality Maxim within verbal irony is only one alternative the user of the language may take, which, though fairly frequent, does not reject other possibilities such as the violation of the other maxims or even the non-violation of any of them. These numerical data are also valuable for the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n° 9, which states that the other off record strategies can co-occur with "be ironic", for all of them are derived from the violation of one of the maxims.

Tables 7.13, 7.14, 7.15, 7.16 & 7.17: Occurrence of the violation of the Gricean Maxims within the Conversational type of verbal irony in the corpora studied

A) *Spoken corpora*

a) LLC (7.13)

Violation of →	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
n° of occ. (out of 64)	23	13	7	21
%	35.94	20.31	10.94	32.81

b) GG (7.14)

Violation of →	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
n° of occ. (out of 65)	20	8	4	23
%	46.15	12.37	6.15	35.39

c) YM (7.15)

Violation of →	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
n° of occ. (out of 40)	24	5	7	4
%	60	12.5	17.5	10

B) Written corpora

a) BR (7.16)

Violation of →	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
n° of occ. (out of 37)	19	1	7	10
%	51.35	2.70	18.92	27.03

b) NA (7.17)

Violation of →	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
n° of occ. (out of 67)	32	8	12	15
%	47.76	11.94	17.91	22.39

7.2.3 Types of verbal irony found in the corpus within the framework of speech act theory. Testing Hypothesis n° 3

It was discussed and shown in chapter 3 that irony can manifest itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech act. We have already seen how the irony of an utterance may result from an opposition of speech acts, i.e., a speaker/writer may choose the strategy of using a different or contrary speech act to the one intended and thus give an ironic effect to his/her utterance. In chapter 3, I presented Haverkate's (1990) classification of irony based on Searle's classification of speech acts, and I showed, by means of an example in the corpus, that one more category could be added to Haverkate's, namely, that of declarative irony (see 3.4.1.1). We could, thus, with this framework of thought in mind, divide all the examples in the corpus in these five categories: a) Assertive ; b) Directive; c) Commissive; d) Expressive and e) Declarative irony. In most cases this categorisation would only tell us what kind of speech act the speaker/writer is using to carry his ironic meaning, but it would

not always tell us about the basis and origin of the contradiction implied in the ironic utterance. There will be cases in which the irony is based precisely on a contradiction of speech acts, i.e., when the act intended is different from the one apparently performed, and, therefore, it will be reasonable to say that the kind of verbal irony used is *speech-act based or oriented*. But there will be other cases in which the implied contradiction leading to the ironic interpretation will not be so much based on the speech act used as on some other kind of contradiction which will be found at other levels, such as that of the proposition, the presuppositions behind some words or expressions, etc.. Therefore, and in spite of the fact that all ironic utterances may be said to be performing a given speech act, I shall classify all the examples in my corpora as either a) *speech-act oriented* or b) *non-speech act oriented*. The former embraces those instances of verbal irony in which the irony is based precisely on an opposition of speech acts, i.e., when the speech act made manifest in the language used is not the intended one. The latter refers to those cases of verbal irony whose foundation is not a contradiction in the speech act used. In this category we may place as examples some prototypical cases where the irony is mainly based on the meaning of the proposition and not on that of the speech act, or some others in which the irony is based mainly on the conventional meanings of some words used. Thus, considering Speech Act Theory, we could have two main kinds of verbal irony, which are illustrated in figure 7.3

Figure 7.3: Types of irony found in relation to Speech Act Theory

VERBAL IRONY	SPEECH ACT-ORIENTED
	NON SPEECH ACT-ORIENTED

In order to illustrate the difference between these two types, I shall now provide some examples from the corpora analysed.

a) Speech-act oriented verbal irony:

A prototypical case of speech act-oriented verbal irony would be present in the pragmatic strategy of asking rhetorical questions, in which case, the speaker seems to be asking a question although he is not. This question generally has the effect of a derogatory statement, as can be observed in the following conversation between Blanche and Dorothy:

[1]

Blanche: What's the baby doing here?

Dorothy: It's Lucy and Ted's baby. Ted had a little accident water-skiing. Lucy's taking him to the hospital.

Blanche: Now we cannot have a baby in this house. My sister's coming.

Dorothy: Does she eat them?

(GG, 1991:39)

This is an example of commissive irony expressed through a rhetorical question, by means of which Dorothy is expressing her disapproval of Blanche's opposition to their taking care of the baby. She is asking a question when she does not expect an

answer and when what she intends is to state her disapproval of Blanche's idea. There is, thus, a clear opposition of speech acts (commissive vs. assertive), and it can be said that the irony is based precisely on this opposition.

Another illustrative example of speech act-oriented irony is the example that led me to conclude that declarative irony can also be possible, leading me, therefore, to accept the part in Hypothesis n° 3 that touches on this issue (see 3.4.1.1). I refer to the following instance from the *Yes Minister* corpus, reproduced as follows:

[2]

<<The phone rang. I grabbed it. It was Frank Weisel, my political adviser, saying that he was on his way over. I told Annie, who wasn't pleased.
"Why doesn't he just move in?" She asked bitterly. Sometimes I just don't understand her. I patiently explained to her that, as my political adviser, I depend on Frank more than anyone.
"Then why don't you marry him?" she asked. "I now pronounce you man and political adviser. Whom politics has joined let no wife put asunder.>>
(YM, 1989:12)

As was stated in 3.4.1.1, there is a contradiction implied here between the performative act of marriage and the real intended assertive act of showing her discontent and discomfort with her husband's behaviour.

b) Non speech act-oriented verbal irony:

As an example of non speech act-oriented verbal irony I consider it appropriate to present the following excerpt from an article published in *The Sunday Telegraph*, in which its author, Sean Langan, shows his skepticism about a device currently making its début in America called "Quick Court". Quick Court looks like

a cash point machine, but, instead of giving the user dollars, it gives him/her a divorce. The whole article has an ironic tone that shows the author's sarcastic laughter at this fast-and-easy way of getting a divorce:

[1]

<<If you are certain your marriage can't be saved, you press a box marked Yes. A mistake at this point could be crucial and mean staying married for a whole 20 minutes more. But supposing you don't change your mind or make a mistake, the machine will then grant you a divorce and then offer you some kindly advice: "Divorce can be emotionally difficult for all members of the family. Conciliation services, legal advice and other help is available.>>

(NA, March 15, 1994)

The irony found in these lines (or, better, between them,) does not seem to be based on an opposition of speech acts. It lies better in the choice of some words, like "crucial", by means of which the author pretends to give importance to a fact that would be not so crucial (after 20 years of marriage, for example, who would care about waiting for 20 more minutes?). The use of inverted commas to quote the "kind" advice of the machine shows the strategy of echoic verbal irony which has been thought of as more appropriate by the writer in this case than that of opposition of speech acts. By echoing the advice given by the machine, the author makes the incongruity and absurdity of these machines self-evident, and also shows the situational irony and the contradiction existing in a machine that can give you an instant divorce but that nevertheless tells you that "divorce can be emotionally difficult for all your family, etc."

I shall now procede to classify all the examples in my

corpora as belonging to one of these two categories (speech act-oriented/non speech act-oriented).

7.2.3.1 Quantitative Analysis of the Speech Act-oriented and Non Speech Act-oriented categories in the corpora studied

Tables 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.21 and 7.22 show the distribution of these two types of verbal irony in the five different corpora analysed.

Tables 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.21 and 7.22: Frequency and percentage of occurrence of the speech act-oriented and non speech act-oriented variables within the examples of verbal irony in the corpora analysed

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC (7.18)

	<i>Speech Act-oriented</i>	<i>Non s.act-oriented</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 86)</i>	22	64
<i>%</i>	25.58	74.42

b) GG (7.19)

	<i>Speech act-oriented</i>	<i>Non s.act-oriented</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 84)</i>	27	57
<i>%</i>	32.14	67.86

c) YM (7.20)

	<i>Speech act-oriented</i>	<i>Non s.act-oriented</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 55)</i>	19	36
<i>%</i>	34.55	65.45

B) *Written Corpora*a) BR (7.21)

	<i>Speech act-oriented</i>	<i>Non s.act-oriented</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 46)</i>	3	43
<i>%</i>	6.52	93.48

b) NA (7.22)

	<i>Speech act-oriented</i>	<i>Non s.act-oriented</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 80)</i>	12	68
<i>%</i>	15	85

Table 7.23: Percentage of occurrence of the Speech act-oriented and Non speech act-oriented variables with respect to the total number of examples of ironic discourse in the corpora

	<i>Speech act-oriented</i>	<i>Non s.act-oriented</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 351)</i>	83	268
<i>%</i>	23.65	76.35

7.2.3.1.1 Discussion of the results

The five corpora used in this research displayed instances of speech act-oriented irony, although there is a higher percentage of occurrence of this kind of verbal irony in the spoken corpora than in the written one (25.58%, 32.14% and 34.55% versus 6.50% and 15%). This is possibly due to the more interactive character of spoken as opposed to written language. In written language the writers seem to feel more inclined to propositional-oriented irony, to echoic irony (marked very frequently by means of inverted commas) or to play with the conventional meanings of words. The results of the statistical chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis n° 3) show that the difference observed between the spoken and the written corpora is a significant one.

In all the corpora, the number of non speech act-oriented examples is greater than the number of speech act-oriented ones, this possibly being proof of the fact that, similar to proposition-oriented irony, this is only one more possible strategy used by English speakers to convey irony. The percentage showing the proportion of speech act-oriented instances of verbal irony with respect to the total number of instances studied is 23.65% (table 7.16), which seems to be a fair number if we consider that there are many other strategies by means of which a speaker/writer may express verbal irony (as will be shown and discussed in chapter 8). Figures 7e and 7f illustrate these results in a graphical way.

Fig. 7e. Frequencies of occurrence of the speech act-oriented & non speech act-oriented variables

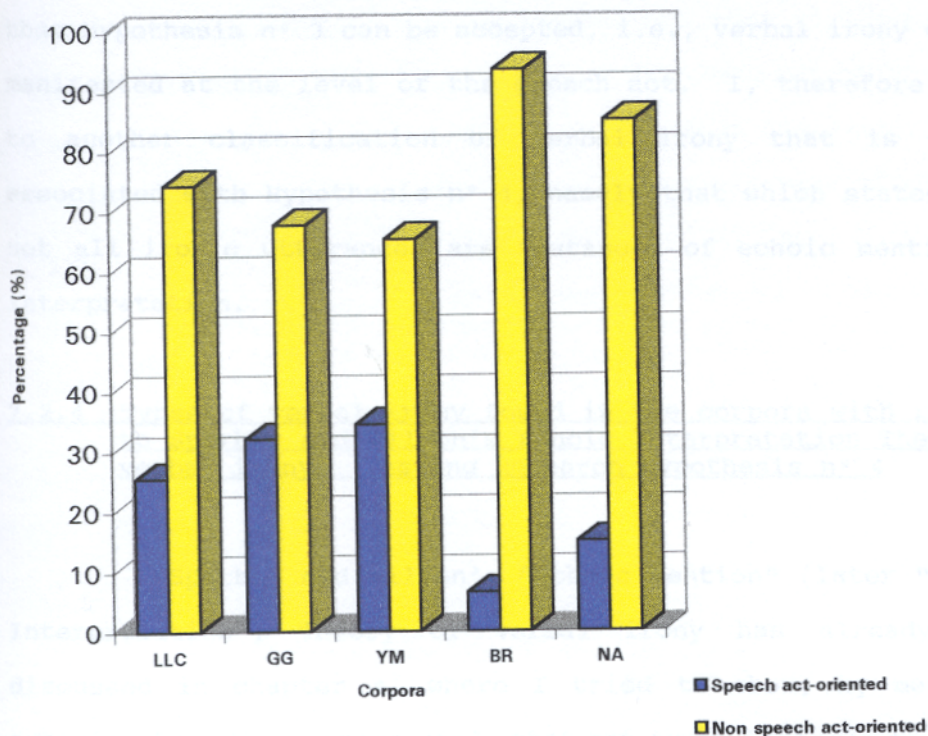
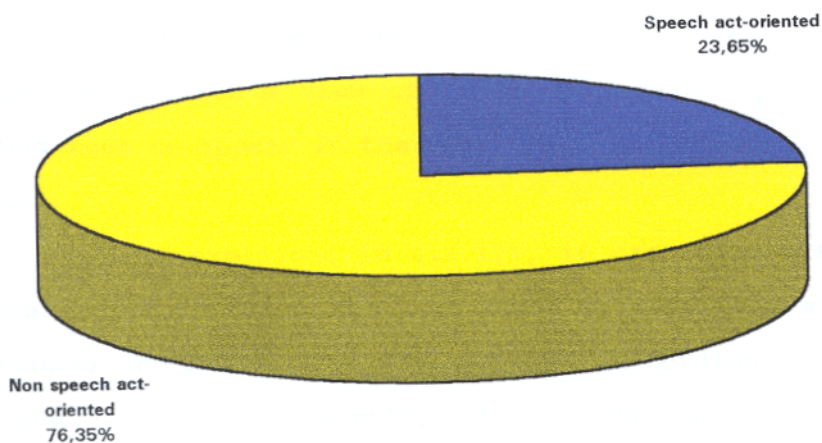


Fig. 7f. Total frequencies of occurrence of the speech act-oriented & non speech act-oriented variables



After these results, it seems reasonable to conclude that Hypothesis n° 3 can be accepted, i.e., verbal irony can be manifested at the level of the speech act. I, therefore, turn to another classification of verbal irony that is to be associated with Hypothesis n° 4, namely that which states that not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention or interpretation.

7.2.4 Types of verbal irony found in the corpora with respect to Sperber and Wilson's Echoic Interpretation Theory of verbal irony. Testing Research Hypothesis n° 4

Sperber and Wilson's "Echoic Mention" (later "Echoic Interpretation") Theory of verbal irony has already been discussed in chapter 4, where I tried to show, by means of examples from the corpora used, that not every instance of verbal irony could be so easily labelled as echoic. In the same chapter, I expressed my disagreement with Sperber and Wilson and tried to justify it by showing that some instances of irony cannot be labelled as "echoic". Therefore, when considering Sperber and Wilson's view of irony, two main types of irony readily seem to appear in the spotlight: a) *Echoic*, and b) *Non-echoic*.

As I explained in 4.3.1.1, if one follows Sperber & Wilson's view to the letter, it could be said that all ironic utterances are echoic, for they may echo (according to them) the "thought of people in general", but, since this explanation seems to be too vague, and, in some cases, it does not seem to explain

the cause of the irony or the strategy used by the speaker, I considered it more appropriate to try to delimit the concept of "echo" by defining it. Therefore, I thought it would be descriptive and explanatory to label some examples in the corpus as *Echoic* when there were some words, opinions or thoughts that were repeated and generally mocked that could be clearly recognised or traced both backwards or forwards in the discourse. As there were many cases in which this recognition could not be done (because, in fact, the speaker's intention was not apparently to echo any person's thought or idea), I classified these cases as *non-echoic*. As far as I have been able to observe in my research, to echo other people's utterances or ideas is but one more strategy that speakers use to convey irony (albeit, in effect, a very frequent one). To limit verbal irony to the echoing of other people's thoughts or ideas would be, in my opinion, and in view of the evidence found in the corpora, to restrict the scope of possibilities of so rich a phenomenon as verbal irony. Many instances would be left aside and, therefore, many pragmatic shades of meaning which are worth analysing would fade away with them. Thus, regarding Sperber & Wilson's *Echoic Theory of irony*, we could speak of two categories found in the corpora analysed, namely, *Echoic* and *Non-echoic*, which are illustrated in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4: Types of verbal irony found in relation to Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory

VERBAL IRONY	ECHOIC
	NON-ECHOIC

Although several examples of both echoic and non-echoic verbal irony were provided and discussed in 4.3.1.1.1 and 4.3.1.1.2, I shall illustrate these two variables here by means of two more examples. The first one has been taken from an article published in *The Spectator*, a British newspaper. Its author, Alasdair Palmer, uses an ironic tone in the whole article to manifest his skepticism about graphology and graphologists. He mocks the decision taken by some companies in France to analyse their prospective employees' handwriting before giving them a post. The concluding paragraph of his article is as follows:

[1]

<<Reliable or not, graphology is growing. Further integration with Europe will mean that more British companies will copy their European counterparts and start using graphology as an integral part of the selection process. But those of you with terrible handwriting should not despair. You can always enlist in a course of graphotherapy to rectify undesirable letter formation and improve your character at the same time.>>

(NA, January 1, 1994)

After reading the whole article, it is clear to the reader that the concluding piece of advice that the author gives is loaded

with irony and is reminiscent of the kind of advice the people he is mocking might give us. He is, thus, echoing these people's thoughts and ideas in order to show his contempt for them and also to tell his readers that, in fact, what he suggests to them is precisely not to follow his apparent advice. Consequently, this is also a case of speech act-oriented verbal irony, where the act of giving advice is not intended.

[2]

In the following conversation between Humphrey and Hacker (from the *Yes, Minister* corpus), Hacker is revenging himself on Humphrey by not giving him a straight answer to his question (since this is what Humphrey has also done to him). Here we encounter both echoic and non-echoic irony:

Humphrey: Minister, I must ask you for a straight answer.
Tomorrow? Monday? Tuesday?

Hacker: In due course, Humphrey. At the appropriate juncture, in the fullness of time, when the moment is right. When the necessary procedures have been completed; nothing precipitate, of course.

Humphrey: Minister, this is getting urgent.

Hacker: Oh! what a lot of new words we are learning!

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: *The Writing on the Wall*)

Hacker's first answer (In due course...) is unequivocally echoic of Humphrey's many previous answers to Hacker's questions, when Humphrey was always ambiguous and never gave a clear, straight answer. But his last reply to Humphrey's request of urgency does not seem to be echoic, though it is, in fact, ironic and

sarcastic: when Hacker exclaims "What a lot of new words we are learning!", he is mocking at Humphrey because he never seemed to feel urgency when Hacker asked him questions before, and, therefore, that is why he says that the word urgent is "new" and he is learning it now. But this idea or thought (that the word "urgent" is new for Humphrey) cannot be traced back to any previous comment or suggested thought of Humphrey's. It cannot be said to be echoing any of Humphrey's utterances or ideas. Hacker makes use of overgeneralization and ambiguity (by saying "we") and uses the word "new" sarcastically, and these seem to be the main strategies on which the irony is based.

7.2.4.1 Quantitative Analysis of the Echoic and Non-echoic variables

The results of the account of both echoic and non-echoic instances of verbal irony are presented here for each of the corpora used (in the same mode as with the variables previously treated in this chapter) in tables 7.24, 7.25, 7.26, 7.27, 7.28 and 7.29.

Tables 7.24, 7.25, 7.26 7.27 and 7.28 : Frequency and percentage of occurrence of the Echoic and Non-echoic variables in the different corpora studied.

A) *Spoken corpora:*

a) *LLC* (7.24)

	<i>Echoic</i>	<i>Non-echoic</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 86)</i>	15	71
<i>%</i>	17.44	82.56

b) *GG* (7.25)

	<i>Echoic</i>	<i>Non-echoic</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 84)</i>	16	68
<i>%</i>	19.05	80.95

c) *YM* (7.26)

	<i>Echoic</i>	<i>Non-echoic</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 55)</i>	19	36
<i>%</i>	58.70	41.30

B) Written Corpora

a) *BR* (7.27)

	<i>Echoic</i>	<i>Non-echoic</i>
number of occ. (out of 46)	27	19
%	58.70	41.30

b) *NA* (7.28)

	<i>Echoic</i>	<i>Non-echoic</i>
number of occ. (out of 80)	46	34
%	57.5	42.5

Table 7.29: Total number of occurrences and percentages of the Echoic and Non-echoic types of verbal irony with respect to the total number of examples analysed

	<i>Echoic</i>	<i>Non-echoic</i>
number of occ. (out of 351)	123	228
%	35.04	64.96

7.2.4.1.1 Discussion of the results

The percentage corresponding to instances of Non-echoic irony is greater than that corresponding to echoic irony in the spoken corpora (82.56%, 80.95% and 65.45% versus 17.44%, 19.05% and 34.55%). However, echoic verbal irony is more frequently

used than non-echoic irony in the written corpora (58.70% and 57.5% for echoic irony against 41.30% and 42.5% for non-echoic irony). This fact is confirmed by the results of the statistical chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 4), which shows that the differences of occurrence of these variables between the written and the spoken corpora are significant.

In any case, there seems to be enough numerical data to accept the statement in Research Hypothesis n°4, namely, that not all examples of verbal irony are echoic. Indeed, the total number of occurrences in all the corpora used (table 7.29) of non-echoic irony is higher (228) than the total number of occurrences of echoic verbal irony (123). Figures 7g and 7h illustrate the data graphically.

Fig. 7g. Frequencies of occurrence of the echoic & non-echoic variables

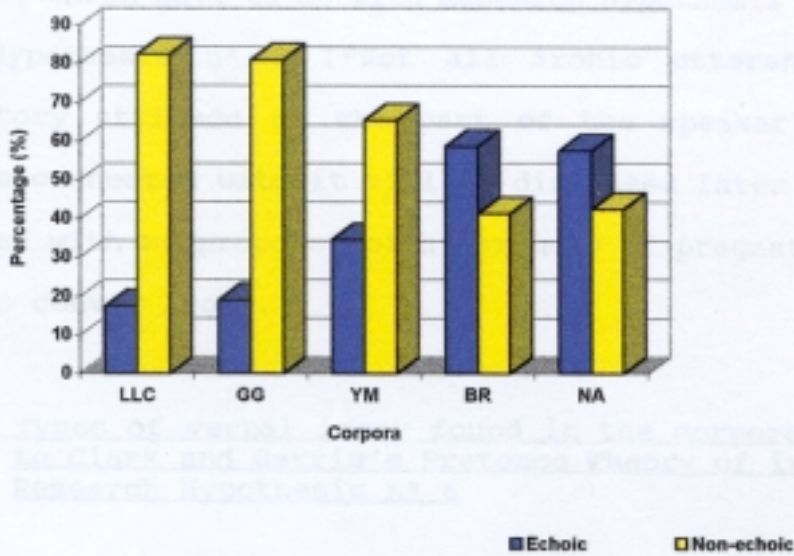
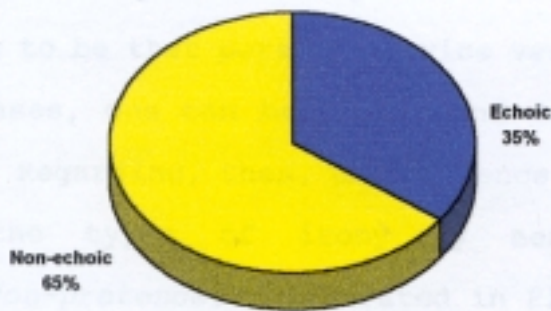


Fig. 7h. Total percentage of the echoic & non-echoic variables

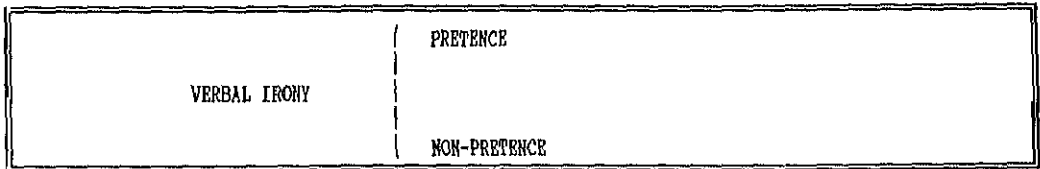


Many of the instances of echoic verbal irony proved to also be instances of pretence, although it cannot be said that there is a one-to-one correspondence between echo and pretence: some of the echoic examples proved to be no instances of pretence and vice versa. I now turn to the results obtained in this respect, which have to do with Research Hypothesis n° 6. I shall skip Hypothesis n° 5 ("Not all ironic utterances convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker) because the results connected with it will be discussed later in chapter 8, together with my proposal of a taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used to convey irony.

7.2.5 Types of verbal irony found in the corpora with respect to Clark and Gerrig's Pretence Theory of irony. Testing Research Hypothesis n° 6

In 4.4.1. I anticipated my belief that verbal irony is not always pretence, and analysed some examples that led me to such a belief. These examples showed us that sometimes a speaker/writer may be echoing someone's words or ideas without pretending to be that person, or vice versa, or, even more, that in some cases, one can be ironic and do without both echo and pretence. Regarding, then, the Pretence Theory of irony, we can express the types of irony by means of the dichotomy Pretence/Non-pretence, illustrated in Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5: Types of verbal irony found in relation to Clark and Gerrig's Pretence Theory of irony



The results displaying the number of occurrences of these two types are exhibited and discussed in the next two sections.

7.2.5.1 Quantitative Analysis of the Pretence and Non-pretence variables

Tables 7.30, 7.31, 7.32, 7.33 and 7.34: Occurrence and percentage of the Pretence and Non-pretence variables in the corpora studied

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC (7.30)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 86)	12	74
%	17.86	82.14

b) GG (7.31)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 84)	15	69
%	17.86	82.14

c) YM (7.32)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 55)	22	33
%	40	60

B) Written Corpora

a) BR (7.33)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 46)	14	32
%	30.43	69.57

b) NA (7.34)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 80)	24	56
%	30	70

Table 7.35: Total number of occurrence and percentage of the Pretence and Non-pretence variables in the corpora studied

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 351)	87	264
%	24.79	75.21

7.2.5.1.1 Discussion of the results

In all the corpora studied the percentage of occurrence of the non-pretence variable is higher than that of the pretence one (86.05%, 82.14%, 60%, 69.57% and 70% versus 13.95%, 17.86%, 40%, 30.43% and 30%. These data show us that both variables are possible for both spoken and written discourse, but they also indicate that, if we considered the Pretence Theory of irony as the only valid theory, we would leave many cases of verbal irony aside and unattended, consequently losing many of its rich possibilities of manifestation. Considering the information given in table 7.35, 75.21% of the cases of verbal irony would be left aside. The results of the statistical test of the chi-square (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 6) show that the distribution of frequencies is not the same for all the corpora, i.e., the differences of frequency of occurrence among the different corpora are significant, which may imply that the variables pretence/non pretence vary according to the type of discourse used.

The data discussed here are graphically represented in Figures 7i and 7j.

Table 6.1. Percentage of occurrence of the different tones within the ironic utterances in the corpus.

TONES	Fall-rise	Fall	Rise	Rise-fall	Level	Total
Percentage	36,0	48,8	8,2	7,0	0,0	100
Occurrence	31	42	7	6	0	86

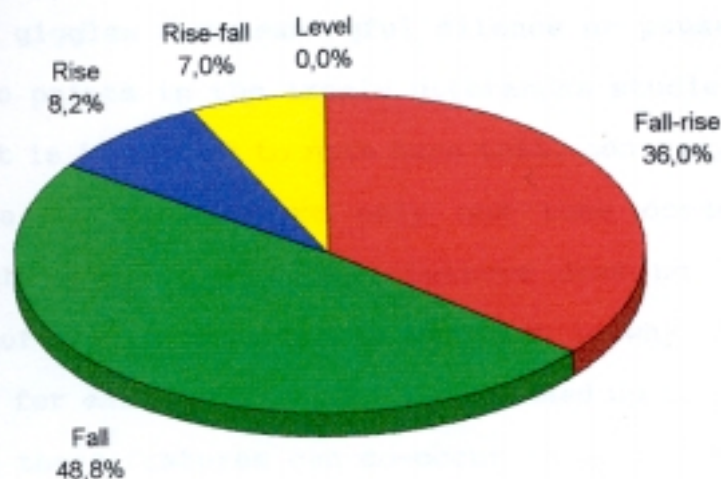


Fig. 6a. Pie chart

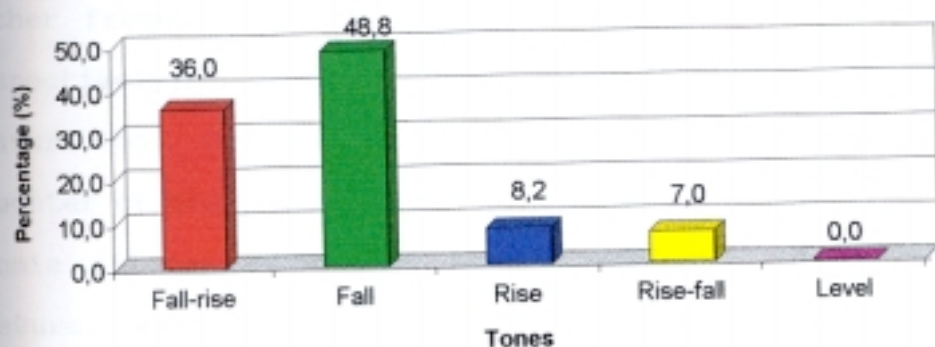


Fig. 6b. Bar chart

7.2.6 Types of verbal irony found with respect to Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory

The main irony types viewed from the Theory of Politeness perspective have already been illustrated in chapter 5 (Figure 5.1), in which I make reference to three main kinds of verbal irony: Negative, Positive and Neutral. Negative and Positive verbal irony may address both the positive and negative face of the hearer or of a third party, whereas Neutral irony seems to be apparently non-face threatening. Since the classification I shall propose as basic for the subsequent development of the different ironic strategies used by speakers/writers is, in general terms, based on these three types, I shall not give any numerical data here, for it would coincide with those given in 8.5.1. These data will provide evidence for Research Hypothesis n° 8, stating that a speaker may convey irony through positive and negative politeness (both on record strategies according to Brown and Levinson) as has already been shown by means of the analysis of some examples in 5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

The quantitative analysis in relation to Research Hypothesis n° 9 (about the co-occurrence of other off record strategies with irony) is not made here, for it is implicit in the one made in 7.2.2, where the confirmation of the possible violation of any of the Gricean Maxims by an ironic speaker is made. Besides, all these off record strategies are included in the taxonomy of strategies presented in chapter 8, where a quantitative analysis of all the strategies will be carried out,

so it would be redundant to do it here.

Numerical data about the conventionalised and implicature-free types of verbal irony have already been given. These data coincide with that of *on record irony* (for there is no triggering of conversational implicatures in these kinds). The number and percentage of occurrence of these two types would then coincide with that of *on record irony*, and it, therefore, tells us about its possibility of existence, in disagreement with the arguments put forward by Brown & Levinson (1987).

7.2.6.1 Quantitative analysis of the on record and off record variables in the corpora studied

I will now present the data corresponding to two types of irony that could additionally be derived (apart from the ones displayed in Figure 5.1) from Politeness Theory, illustrated in Figure 7.6.

Figure 7.6: Types of irony found with respect to Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

VERBAL IRONY	ON RECORD
	OFF RECORD

Within the *on record* type, I will include all the cases of conventionalised and implicature-free verbal irony found in

the different corpora (for they do not demand the formation of conversational implicatures), and, under the off record label, I shall include all the examples in which it is clear that the speaker/writer is violating one or more of the Maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle, therefore making the hearer/reader work out inferences of the type of conversational implicatures (in agreement with Brown & Levinson's definition of off recordness - see 5.2~).

I must note here that, as was stated and illustrated in chapter 5, (see 5.3.1 and 5.3.2) both on record and off record strategies may co-occur, and this has proved to be true for many of the examples in the corpora studied. However, I will classify as "off record" all the examples which demand the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer, no matter if they are also mixed with on record strategies. The ones labelled "on record" will be only the "pure" ones, which do not demand the working out of implicatures.

I now turn to the numerical data obtained for these two variables.

Tables 7.36, 7.37, 7.38, 7.39 and 7.40: Occurrence and percentage of the on record and off record variables in the corpora studied

A) *Spoken corpora*

a) LLC (7.36)

	<i>On record</i>	<i>Off record</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 86)</i>	22	64
<i>%</i>	25.58	74.42

b) GG (7.37)

	<i>On record</i>	<i>Off record</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 84)</i>	19	65
<i>%</i>	22.62	77.38

c) YM (7.38)

	<i>On record</i>	<i>Off record</i>
<i>number of occ. (out of 55)</i>	15	40
<i>%</i>	27.27	72.73

B) Written corpora

a) BR (7.39)

	<i>On record</i>	<i>Off record</i>
number of occ. (out of 46)	9	37
%	19.57	80.43

b) NA (7.40)

	<i>On record</i>	<i>Off record</i>
number of occ. (out of 80)	13	67
%	16.25	83.75

Table 7.41: Percentage of occurrence of the on record and off record variables with respect to the total number of ironic examples in the corpora analysed

	<i>On record</i>	<i>Off record</i>
number of occ. (out of 351)	78	273
%	22.22	77.78

7.2.6.1.1 Discussion of the results

The figures in the above tables show that there can be no doubt as to the off recordness of a great number of instances of ironic spoken and written discourse. The great majority of the examples of irony studied in the corpora (77.78% in total) were labelled as off record, considering the fact that they

demanding the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer/reader. However, there are also a number of examples that fitted well within the on record label, which, with respect to the total number of ironic examples, represent 25.58% in LLC, 22.62% in GG, 27.27% in YM, 19.57% in BR and 16.25% in NA. As can be seen, the occurrence of "purely on record" verbal irony is fairly even in all the corpora here studied and this occurrence adds to the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n° 8. It appears to be the case that on record irony is likely to occur more frequently in spoken than in written discourse. Nevertheless, this difference shown in the tables does not seem to be significant, considering the results of the statistical chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis n°8), which show that the frequencies of occurrence of these two variables is the same for both the written and the spoken corpora.

The data discussed here are graphically represented in figures 7k and 7l.

Fig. 7k. Frequencies of occurrence of the on record & off record variables

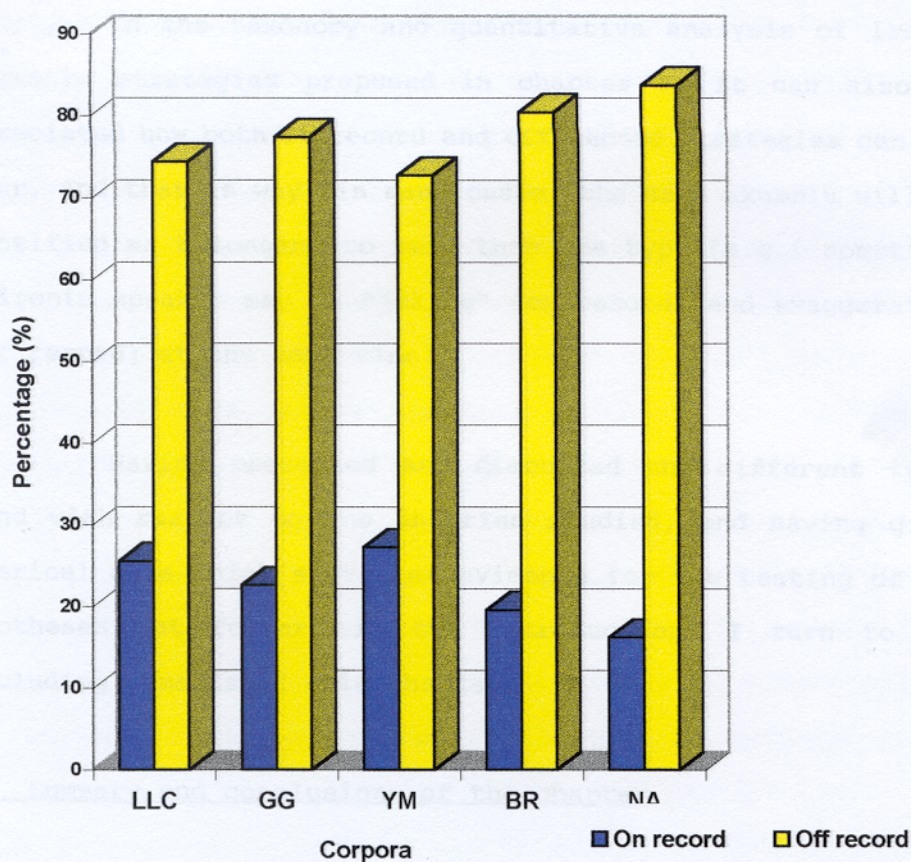
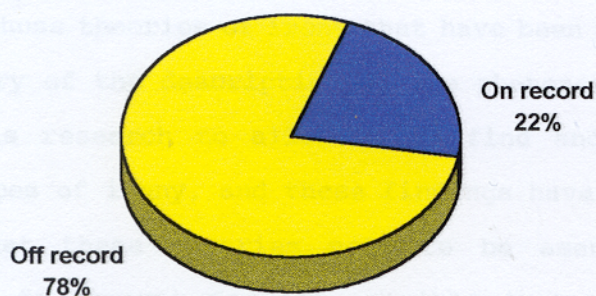


Fig. 7l. Total percentage of the on record & off record variables



In the taxonomy and quantitative analysis of ironic pragmatic strategies proposed in chapter 8, it can also be appreciated how both on record and off record strategies can co-occur, and that is why, in many cases, the same example will be classified as belonging to more than one type (e.g.: sometimes an ironic speaker may be "joking" (on record) and exaggerating (off record) at the same time).

Having presented and discussed the different types found with respect to the theories studied, and having given numerical data which served as evidence for the testing of the hypotheses put forward in the Introduction, I turn to the concluding remarks of this chapter.

7.3 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

The data and statistical analysis presented in this chapter has helped clarify those aspects treated as variables in the majority of the hypotheses put forward in the introductory chapter of this thesis (Hyp. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, & 9). The scrutiny of those theories of irony that have been most prominent in the history of the description of the phenomenon has thrown light on this research to allow me to find and characterize different types of irony, and these findings have led me to the awareness that these theories need to be amended if their objective is to account for all possible instances of verbal irony.

Specifically, the analysis made in this chapter has rendered the following conclusions:

- If the researcher looks at verbal irony from the point of view of Traditional theories, s/he will have to acknowledge that there is more to irony than "meaning the opposite of the literal proposition", and, therefore at least two main types have to be accounted for: *proposition-oriented* irony and *non proposition-oriented* irony. The data collected from the corpora used for this research (as well as the results of the statistical tests) confirmed the existence of the latter type of irony: in all the corpora investigated the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented type was greater than that of the proposition-oriented type. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that Research Hypothesis n° 1 can be accepted.

- If we look at verbal irony from the standpoint of Grice's Theory of Implicature, we shall have to conclude, on the basis of the evidence of the corpus examples, that there is more to irony than the violation of the Gricean Maxims. In many instances this violation is observed, but, in many others, there is no such violation. A speaker may be ironic without violating any of the Gricean Maxims, be it because the implicature has been short-circuited (and, therefore, the irony has been conventionalised) or simply because there is no triggering of conversational implicatures. The conventional implicatures of the words or expressions being used are the key to the irony. Thus, from this perspective, there seem to be three main types

of verbal irony, namely, *Conversational*, *Conventionalised* and *Implicature-free*. The quantitative data presented for these three types showed that, even though the conversational type of irony is the one having the highest percentages of occurrence, the other two types ought not to be disregarded, for they represent a considerable number of the cases studied (approximately one fourth of the total number). Likewise, these data and the statistical analysis carried out on their basis, provide evidence for the acceptance of Hypotheses n° 2 ("Verbal irony can be conveyed not only through conversational, but also through conventional implicature"), n° 7 ("An ironic writer/speaker can not only violate the Quantity Maxim but also the other three Gricean Maxims"), and n° 9 ("A speaker/writer can make different off record strategies co-occur in order to convey an ironic meaning").

- If verbal irony is viewed from the standpoint of speech-act theory, the observer will clearly see that, in many instances the implicit contradiction or opposition characteristic of irony is not precisely at the propositional level, but at the speech-act level. Therefore, one has to conclude that there is a speech act-oriented type of verbal irony. Many times, the ironic speaker does not mean the opposite of his/her proposition, he intends to show a contradiction or clash between the act apparently performed and the one intended. But not all instances of irony show this type of clash, which shows that there is also a non-speech act-oriented type of verbal irony. The numerical

data worked out for these two types tell us that there is a majority of instances of non-speech act-oriented verbal irony in the five corpora analysed, but the percentage of occurrence of the speech act-oriented type is higher for the spoken corpora than for the written one (as was confirmed by the statistical χ^2 test). In any case, the existence of the speech act-oriented type has proved to be real in 23.65% of the total cases, which seems to be sufficient evidence for the acceptance of one part of Research Hypothesis n° 3 ("Irony manifests itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech act..."); and within this type, the finding of an example of performative irony (see 7.2.3.a) seems to confirm the second part of this hypothesis ("...and it can even be manifested through declarative (performative) speech acts").

- If we think of verbal irony in terms of Sperber and Wilson's Echoic theory, the evidence of the data will tell us that, even though many instances of verbal irony are clearly echoic, many others are not. The data collected and presented in this respect in this chapter have shown that the total number of non-echoic examples in the corpora was greater than the number of echoic ones (228 versus 123), which seems to be sufficient evidence for the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n° 4 ("Not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention"). The statistical chi-squared test showed that the frequencies of occurrence of these two variables varies for the written and the spoken corpora; the proportion of non-echoic instances of irony is

greater in the spoken corpora than in the written corpora.

- As regards the consideration of the Pretence Theory of irony, as with the Echoic Theory, some of the cases studied proved to be instances of pretence but others did not. Non-pretence verbal irony proved to be more frequent than pretence irony, both in the spoken and the written corpora (as the results of the statistical chi-squared test also confirmed), which implies that looking at irony only through the prism of this theory would leave many instances unattended (as it is also the case with the other theories). These data are also taken as evidence for the acceptance of Hypothesis n° 6 ("Not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence").

- Finally, and with respect to Brown & Levinson's Politeness theory, it was found that even though these authors place irony as an off record strategy, in some instances the ironic utterance analysed proved to be on record, therefore leaving the door open to the consideration of both an off record and an on record type of verbal irony. The data obtained displays a much higher percentage of occurrence of off record irony than of on record irony for all the corpora studied (as confirmed by the statistical chi-squared test), but the 22.22% of instances of on record irony found appear to be sufficient evidence for the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n° 8 ("The ironic speaker/writer can make use not only of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make his/her point").

In conclusion, the data obtained in the study carried out in this chapter seem to support the argument put forward in this thesis with respect to the non-explanatory power of the available theories: although each of them points to a certain characteristic of verbal irony, none of them seems to account for all the possible occurrences of the intricate phenomenon of verbal irony. This is probably due to the "slippery" character of irony, about which all the authors studying the phenomenon seem to be in agreement. That is why it is so difficult to define. The authors that have ventured a definition have done so at the expense of being criticised by those who find the frequent exceptions to the rule. Others do not dare define it and speak of a "characterisation", such as K. Barbe (1995), who writes:

<<With care, I try to avoid the term *definition*. Partly perhaps because of Muecke's (1969:14) wonderful statement: "since... Erich Heller, in his *Ironie-German*, has already quite adequately not defined irony, there would be little point in not defining it all over again". For the time being, let me call it a characterization or description.>> (1995: 9)

The analysis of the phenomenon in the light of the different theories, however, has helped me in the attempt to define or, better, characterise verbal irony, and this is what I shall try to do in the next two chapters. Each of these theories are mirrored in one or more of the pragmatic strategies described in Chapter 8, but the taxonomy proposed there (as well as the discourse functions discussed in chapter 9) gives additional information as to the cause, motivations, intentions

and techniques of the speakers/writers who use ironic discourse. The pragmatic concepts of *strategy* and *function* seem to be more explanatory and to lend themselves to the coverage of all instances of the phenomenon. I now turn to this issue.

Chapter 8:

PROPOSAL OF A TAXONOMY OF
PRAGMATIC STRATEGIES USED BY
ENGLISH SPEAKERS/WRITERS IN
IRONIC DISCOURSE: QUALITATIVE
AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

<<An ironic statement of friendship or love, however feeble the irony will be stronger than a simple "I love you" - unless it is reversed because the irony has been missed, or weakened because it is seen as a hint of *blame disguised as disguised blame*. "You don't thrill me when you hold me, no, not much"- even this drab stroke, from a recent popular song, implies an intellectual sharing: we not only love each other, we understand each other. It thus runs the risks, and may reap the rewards, implicit in all stable ironies.>>

Wayne Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined verbal irony as a phenomenon that can manifest itself through different types, depending on the standpoint taken by the careful observer. The discovery and analysis of these types was necessary for the acceptance of most of the hypotheses put forward in the introductory chapter. All these hypotheses were derived from a Main Hypothesis, which claims that "irony is a complex phenomenon which cannot be explained in its totality by means of the existing theories" and that "the pragmatic concept of strategy, as well as the concept of discourse function, can help in its explanation and characterisation". In this chapter I shall try to show how the concept of pragmatic strategy can help in its explanation and characterisation. I shall concentrate on the

explanation of the phenomenon of verbal irony by means of the description and analysis of the pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers, making, in this way, a proposal for a further approach to verbal irony. My approach in no way attempts to boast of being a new theory of verbal irony. It simply describes the phenomenon from a pragmatic point of view, focusing on the various and different strategies a speaker may make use of to produce ironic discourse. In a sense, it can be asserted that this is an eclectic approach, because, albeit within the pragmatic perspective, it takes into account all the most prominent approaches and theories of verbal irony that have been put forward by different authors through the history of linguistic discussion. The implicit message of my proposal is, thus, that the features of irony emphasized by these authors are all, indeed, possible features of irony that signal a possible strategy that may be chosen by an ironist, but that there are other features (implicit in other possible strategies) that also characterize irony, as the evidence of the instances of ironic discourse found in the corpus seems to confirm.

Before discussing the taxonomy of strategies, I present an attempt to define the two key concepts of my proposal in this chapter: a) Strategy and b) Verbal irony. As regards the latter concept, perhaps it would be better to speak of a characterization, since, as was shown in chapter 2, and as is a matter of shared and common knowledge among all authors studying the problem, one of the ironies of irony is the fact that, albeit easily recognizable, it is a slippery concept, and, therefore,

it escapes tight definitions. My definition/characterisation tries to be in agreement with the general approach taken in this piece of research, as well as with the results coming out of it. My aim is to describe pragmatic meanings in the best possible way and this I will try to do by following Leech's remark: "Meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language" (1983: 6). This study, thus, has a pragmatic basis, for, at the time of classifying the different strategies, reference was made to elements such as addressers or addressees, the context of the ironic utterances, or other pragmatic variables which have already been specified in the previous chapters in general, and in Chapter 3 in particular, such as speech acts, power, distance, etc. A quantitative analysis of these strategies is also presented in order to give a general idea of the observed frequencies of occurrence of the different strategies in the corpora used. The data here will be presented separately for each of the corpora, for they represent different types of discourse, and (as in the previous chapter) it was considered a fact that the variable of genre may influence the quantitative results, i.e., the type of discourse used may influence the type of verbal irony used and the frequency with which each strategy is used. This is also the reason why the spoken corpora are distinguished from the written corpora. Other variables that might influence are "unprepared" versus "prepared" or "previously planned" discourse. The examples in the LLC display instances of unprepared or unplanned irony as they occur in normal conversation, whereas the ones in the other corpora

were more or less planned beforehand by the television series writers (in *Yes, Minister* and *The Golden Girls*) or by Bertrand Russell and the writers of the newspaper articles.

It is my belief that this analysis of the ironic strategies used by English speakers presents a more detailed and comprehensive approach than the ones I have studied and discussed in previous chapters. This analysis shows that verbal irony may be both echoic and non-echoic; that sometimes the ironic speaker may mean the opposite of his/her proposition, but that, on some other occasions, he may not; that in some opportunities s/he may be aggressive, but, in others, he may not; and so forth. It tries to embrace as many modes of occurrence of the phenomenon as possible, although I am conscious of the fact that the group of pragmatic irony strategies is an open group and that it allows for much creativity on the part of the speaker, in such a way that it would be impossible to describe all the possibilities. As was noted in Chapter 2, irony is a versatile phenomenon indeed.

This is a corpus-based analysis and, therefore, the strategies specified in the taxonomy were found in the corpora. However, I have included in the taxonomy a few more strategies that -albeit not represented in the corpus examples- are considered as manifestations of verbal irony by certain authors and that fit in the definition of verbal irony adopted in this research. Bruce Fraser (1995: personal communication) encouraged me to do so on the grounds that a linguist cannot discard good examples of the phenomenon s/he is studying simply because it

does not appear in the corpus being handled. In any case, these are only a few strategies which, far from hindering the achievement of the objectives of this study, have contributed to shed light on its findings.

As was specified in the Introduction, the total number of instances of verbal irony analysed in the corpora is 351, of which 86 were found in the LLC, 84 in GG, 55 in YM, 46 in BR, and 80 in NA.

I shall now proceed to define and characterise the two above-mentioned key concepts: *strategy* and *verbal irony*.

8.2 Definitions/characterizations proposed

a) Strategy

In a previous paper (Alba Juez, 1995b), I pointed to the fact that there are authors such as Brown & Levinson (1987) who have used the concept of strategy widely but who nevertheless have not defined such a concept. I, therefore, thought that a definition was necessary and I ventured to provide my own definition, which I reproduce herein:

<<An attempt on the part of the speaker to reach (by means of various linguistic procedures) a given communicative aim.>> (1995b: 22)

Once we know what a pragmatic strategy is, we have the basis for the definition of verbal irony which I think to be the most appropriate for the purposes of this study.

b) Verbal irony:

A super-strategy embracing many subsidiary pragmatic strategies used by speakers or writers to express meanings which are based on one or more of a group of underlying semantic oppositions such as: spiritual/material, true/false, positive/negative, love/hate, self/others, etc.. These oppositions may be made manifest at different levels such as those of the proposition, the speech act or even the phonological level. It generally involves an attitude on the part of the speaker that shows derision in most cases but that can also build rapport among the interlocutors and/or be used to praise or express positive feelings, or it can also show neutrality on the part of the speaker with respect to his attitude towards himself, the hearer or a third party.

This characterisation takes into account three aspects which, after so much reflexion and research on the phenomenon of verbal irony, I have found to be crucial:

1) *The underlying semantic oppositions:* This aspect is one that I have found to be permanent in all the instances of verbal irony studied, and one that forms part of the essence of the concept. As has been noted in previous chapters, the classical approaches pointed to the contradictory nature of irony, but they restricted it to the level of the proposition, and this seems to be the source of the limitations of their definitions. As I shall try to show in the examples provided to illustrate each of the strategies, in every case, the speaker/writer is resorting to one or more of the following underlying semantic oppositions: true/false, spiritual/material, positive/negative, real situation/desired, contrived or perceived situation, facts/imagination, love/hate, richness/poverty, self/others, meaning1/meaning2, agreement/disagreement, belief/disbelief,

expected/unexpected, sanity/madness, youth/old age, good/bad, ignorance/wisdom, speech act1/speech act2, success/failure, prominence/non-prominence, infinity/finiteness, power/impotence, passion/reason, religion/atheism.

2) *The oppositions manifest themselves at different linguistic levels:* this is an issue that has been discussed and illustrated with examples taken from the corpora in previous chapters. We have been able to differentiate an opposition at the level of the proposition from one at the level of the speech act or one at the presupposition level. This awareness of the fact that the underlying semantic oppositions can be present at different levels has been, I believe, crucial for understanding that a speaker may be telling the truth and nevertheless be ironic, for the opposition in these cases is not to be found at the level of the proposition, but at any other level.

3) *The attitude on the part of the speaker towards the hearer may be positive, negative or neutral:* As was noted in previous chapters, a speaker may choose the strategy of verbal irony not only to express derision towards the hearer or a third party but also to express praise or good intentions or feelings. In addition, in some particular cases, the speaker may show neither a positive nor a negative attitude towards a given person or situation, and those are the cases which I have labelled as Neutral. It has also been observed that, even in the cases of Negative irony used against the hearer, a positive attitude may be implicit towards a third party, or vice versa, when the aggressiveness is directed to a third party, a positive attitude

may be implicitly directed to the hearer. These three types of verbal irony will be considered as the three main options a speaker has before choosing the particular ironic sub-strategy that will allow him/her to reach his/her communicative aim. I now turn to them.

8.3 Three main types of verbal irony

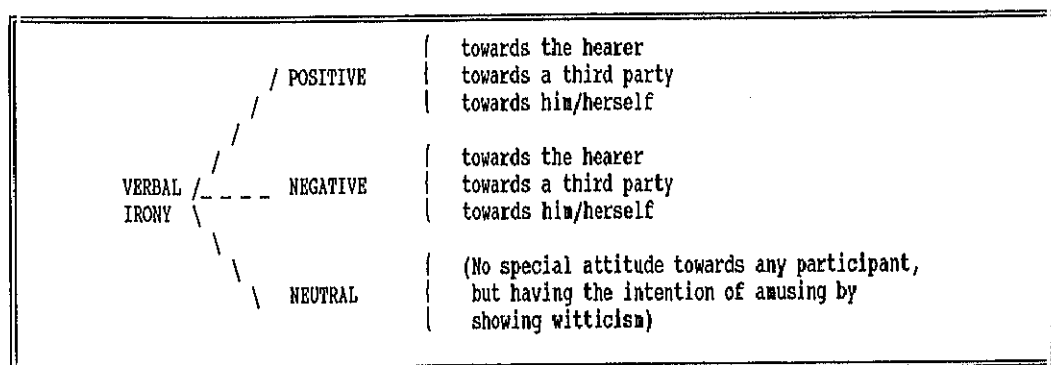
The argument put forward for this classification supports the view that before making any formal choices regarding the language to be used, the speaker/writer of verbal irony has first an intention and/or an attitude that he wants to communicate (and this is in close connection with the function intended -see chapter 9-). The attitudes or intentions may be of three main kinds, namely, Positive, Negative and Neutral and will manifest themselves in actual language through the realization of a given set of strategies which are based on a given set of semantic oppositions. Therefore, from the point of view of the intentions and/or attitudes of the speaker, we may classify verbal irony in the following manner:

- a) *Positive irony*: used when the intention of the speaker is to praise or express a positive attitude or feeling towards himself, the hearer or a third party.
- b) *Negative irony*: used when the intention of the speaker is to criticize or express some kind of negative attitude or feeling towards himself, the hearer, a third party or a situation.
- c) *Neutral irony*: used to express neither a negative nor a

positive attitude towards any participant. The intention here may be simply to amuse the hearer or a third party in either a positive or a negative way.

The choices explained above are illustrated in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: Main types of verbal irony from the standpoint of the speaker's attitudes and intentions



As noted in the introduction to this chapter, I got to this classification after analysing hundreds of examples in the corpora and also some other examples which were not in the corpora but that I could not ignore or reject because they were given and analysed by scholars who have also studied the phenomenon of verbal irony in a serious manner.

I shall now proceed to present the taxonomy of strategies deriving from these three main types, which constitute, in my view, the second choice the speaker has to make once s/he chooses one of the three main types of irony. I must point to the fact that many of the strategies may be used for either of the three main types of verbal irony and, even more,

that many times both Negative and Positive irony may be chosen by the speaker to work together (as was anticipated in 5.3 with respect to Politeness Theory).

8.4 A proposal of a taxonomy of sub-strategies of the superordinate pragmatic strategy "Use verbal irony"

Assuming that "Use verbal irony" is a pragmatic strategy any speaker can choose to attain certain communicative aims, and that within that strategy s/he may decide to use Positive, Negative or Neutral irony, I shall derive all the sub-strategies found in this investigation from these three types. First, I shall describe all the strategies found to express Negative Irony, given the fact that this kind of irony has proved to be the most frequent (as will be confirmed by the quantitative analysis in 8.6).

8.4.1 Negative verbal irony: Be aggressive towards yourself, the hearer, a third party or a situation

The strategies included here are those in which it was found that the speaker was attacking (strongly or mildly) either him/herself, the hearer, a person other than the hearer or a given situation. (All the negative ironic strategies will be labelled with the letter "A").

A 1: Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance

This type has been discussed widely all through this

work. It includes the prototypical cases of irony, of which many examples were given in 2.4.1. The basic underlying opposition for this type is that of true/false or also literal/intended meaning. Other oppositions may also be implicit, depending on each particular case.

As has already been noted, this is a strategy also valid for Positive irony. An example in which it is evident that the speaker is being aggressive is the following remark by Hacker after Humphrey complains about the Minister's attitude of not being entirely straightforward:

Hacker: Oh! the expert on straightforwardness!

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

Hacker is here taking revenge on Humphrey's continuous ambiguity by not giving him a straightforward answer this time; so, when Humphrey complains about Hacker's lack of straightforwardness, he refers to Humphrey in an exclamatory way as "the expert on straightforwardness", when what he in fact means is that Humphrey is no expert on straightforwardness at all, accusing him in this way of never being honest and direct with him.

A 2: Use a proposition which is contrary to general belief, but not contrary to what you mean

This strategy represents one of the intricate paths that irony may take. In the following text, written by Bertrand Russell, he includes communism as one of the great religions of

the world, and he means what he says, a fact that tells us that he finds many things in common between communism and the great religions of the world. However, the reader is expected to know that communism is not a religion but a political régime (and that, even more, this régime was against religion) and this is what causes the ironic effect, which in turn tells the reader that he is criticising communism and putting it in the same category as the great religions that are -in his opinion- untrue and harmful:

<<There has been a rumour in recent years to the effect that I have become less opposed to religious orthodoxy than I formerly was. This rumour is totally without foundation. I think all the great religions of the world -Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Communism- both untrue and harmful>>

(BR, 1958: 53)

Russell is here being ironically aggressive towards communism, by saying that it turned out to be completely the opposite of what it was meant to be. This aggressiveness may be said to be aimed at a third party if the reader does not belong to the communist party, and at the reader if the reader happens to be a communist. The underlying opposition of this piece of verbal irony seems to be that existing between the real situation (communism is like a religion) and the desired one (communism was intended to be opposed to religion).

- A 3 Use a proposition you consider to be true, but which is opposite to the one considered to be true by the hearer

This is another variant of the strategies which focus on the proposition, but it cannot be said that the speaker means

the opposite of his literal proposition. One of the examples that led me to consider this variant is the following:

```
B      21 5I ^mean it would be !so /
a      20 5+[m]+ /
(B     11 5n\ice to get a 'good de'gree# /
B      11 5cos I've ^w\orked so 'hard# /
a      20 5[m] you will . what [e] paper do you feel most [k@]/
a      20 5confident on - /
C      11 5^Lit !Cr\it I th\ink# - - /
a      20 5[m] why - - /
B      11 5[?@] it's ^my sort of !th\inking# - - /
B      11 5I ^th\ink# . /
B      11 5you ^kn/ow# /
```

(LLC, 7.1)

When B says "I think, you know" she is contrasting her statement to the hearer's possible preconceptions about her capacity to think. She means what she says, but there is irony based precisely on this underlying contrast of belief/disbelief: what she believes of herself contrasted to what she thinks her interlocutor believes. the falling-rising tone on "think" and the rising tone on "you know" also contribute to the insinuating tone of the statement (see 6.2). The speaker here is being mildly aggressive towards the hearer, by challenging what she considers to be his beliefs about her.

A 4: Show in your utterance that you have interpreted your interlocutor's statement as having an opposite meaning

Consider the following exchange between Hacker and John
(a member of Parliament):

Hacker: How many people know about the winner of the Napoleon Prize?

John: Oh! It's top secret!

Hacker: You mean... everyone.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

By interpreting John's statement as meaning quite the opposite, Hacker is being ironic and skeptical about the secrecy of every issue that is labelled "top secret" among the members of parliament. He is telling John that he does not believe they are capable of keeping a secret. Again, it cannot be said that Hacker is using a proposition contrary to the one meant, but it can be said that there exists an underlying opposition which is that of belief versus disbelief (in the secrecy of the secrets of parliament, in this case). In this way, Hacker also shows mild aggressiveness towards John and the system in general, criticising them in an indirect manner.

A 5: Use formal language and affected or "non-core" vocabulary when it is not apparently required by the situation or context

In Chapter 2 (2.4.2, e.g. 1), the fact that Russell was mocking a sector of society by using formal language and affected vocabulary was pointed out. The same fact was again focused on in chapter 5, when discussing the possibilities of use of all the formalities of Negative Politeness to express ironic meanings (see 5.3). I refer the reader to those examples to avoid repetition here. The general underlying contrast for these cases may be the expected/unexpected one, for the speaker is using formal language when it is not expected, and this is what makes

the hearer work out the necessary implicatures for the understanding of the irony. There may, however, be other underlying oppositions relative to each particular case. The use of indirect conventionalised expressions (showing overpoliteness) in some examples quoted in previous chapters, like Leech's (1983) "Do you have to spill ash on the carpet?", Searle's (1975) "Ought you to eat so much spaghetti?" or Haverkate's (1988) "Could you do me the favour of shutting up?" is included in this type. The same holds for the use of "non-core" words discussed in 6.5 in relation to written verbal irony.

A 6: Use words or expressions that have a somewhat different (though not opposite) meaning from the one conveyed

Example 3 in 2.4.2 (Chapter 2) is an instance of the occurrence of this strategy. When the two academics are criticizing the Head of Department and they refer to him as being "idiosyncratic", they are trying to avoid a stronger word (which, to judge from the context, could be "crazy" or "lunatic"), of which "idiosyncratic" does not appear to be the opposite. "Idiosyncratic" is only a different and suggestive word, that leaves the door open to the hearer's own interpretation. The speaker is showing aggressiveness towards a third party (the Head of the Department), but he is building rapport with the hearer, who apparently shares his thoughts and, therefore, becomes his "accomplice". The underlying opposition seems to be that of agreement/disagreement (with the Head of Department's ideas). Remember they are discussing the Head of Department's ideas about

teaching literature).

A 7: Use puns: Make the hearer retrieve two mental frames

In 5.5.4 (e.g. 4), I made reference to a conversation between Blanche, Rose and Sophia (in *The Golden Girls*) in which Sophia tells Blanche that the name of an egg dish named after her in Tuscaloosa is "over easy". I noted there that the speaker (Sophia) is taking advantage of her power over the hearers to criticize by "giving association clues" to mean that Blanche is "easy" with men. These association clues are given by the two meanings of the word "easy" that the hearer has to retrieve. Sophia is making use of a pun on the word "easy" to criticise Blanche and be aggressive towards her. The underlying opposition here is precisely that existing between the two possible meanings (meaning1/meaning2).

A 8: Use suffixes that indicate a certain degree of derision

It seems to be the case that, in English, the suffix *-ish* may be used sometimes as an indication of a certain derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker, as is shown in this conversation:

A	11 3^but I !c\ertainly#	/
A	11 3[@ @] you ^kn/ow#	/
A	11 3one has ^rather mixed f\eelings#	/
A	11 3I in [@] - an ^\odd 'sort of w/ay#	/
A	11 3^s\ome of them#	/
A	11 3[?@] the "\actors I 'thought#	/
A	11 3were a ^bit sort of "\amateurish#	/
b	20 3oh yes	/
A	11 3and I [d] "^can't say I liked :Andrew R\ay very	/
A	11 3much#	/

(LLC, 7.1)

A is being mildly ironic in his judgement of the actors in the play they are discussing. He is trying to minimise his criticism, and, to that effect, he uses the suffix "-ish" in the word "amateur" and also uses the hedge "a bit sort of". A does all this instead of saying that he did not like the actors. This is a case of what Leech (1983) called "use of irony to avoid being impolite", the underlying opposition being good/bad (good vs. bad acting in this case).

A 9: Change the name of somebody (nickname) or something deliberately

We have seen in 3.3 that some nicknames in some cultures may become conventionalised ironies, as is the case of tall men nicknamed "Shortie" in Western America or blind men called "men with a thousand eyes" in India. But I have also found several examples of this strategy that are conversational, i.e., cases in which the speaker changes the name of a person or thing to be ironic in that particular situation. The irony is not valid in other contexts, and, therefore, it demands the working out of implicatures on the part of the speaker/reader. In this example from the GG corpus, we find Sophia changing the name of a game ironically, which shows her negative/aggressive attitude towards the French:

Blanche: Hi Sophia. Boy, I tell you, there is nothing more invigorating than spending a little time on a boat.

Sophia: Oh yeah? Not when I sailed to America. Picture it. There were -a tired, poor, huddled mass eating marinara

sauce out of a can. It was hell. And the entertainment. Some guy from Palermo forgot his accordion so he sat around singing "O Solo Mio" while squeezing a monkey.

(Blanche laughs)

Blanche: Sophia.

Sophia: Sophia what? It was the worst time of my life. If it weren't for "pin-the-tail-on-the-French", we would've gone stir-crazy.

(GG, 1991: 86)

In order to understand this piece of verbal irony, one needs to have certain knowledge of the world about a game called "pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey" and about the Italian not liking the French very much. Sophia is Italian and so were her companions on the boat to America, who apparently changed the name of the game on purpose, to express their contempt for the French in an ironic, indirect way. The equation French = donkeys rapidly comes to the mind of the hearer. The underlying opposition can be said to be real situation/contrived situation (the real name of the game versus that made up by the people on the boat). Another illustrative example to consider here is the occasion when Daniel (a member of Parliament in the *Yes, Minister* series) nicknames Hacker as "Lord Hacker of Kamikaze" (in the episode called "The Writing on the Wall") when his intention is to criticise him for his ridiculous self-sacrificing policy, which, according to Daniel, will lead him to his political suicide (and, from there, the nickname). There is again an opposition between the real name and the one made up, in this case, by Daniel.

A 10: Use contradictory speech acts

In this category, we find instances such as the use of

"sarcastic please" (see 3.4); or Haverkate's (1990) example "Could you do me the favour of shutting up?", which give the appearance of a request when they are in fact commands. Several examples of different contradictory speech acts were found in the corpora, from Humphrey's frequent answer "Yes, Minister" (which gave the name to the series, and appears to show acceptance and submission on the part of Humphrey when, in fact, it means rejection and rebellion -substrategy c below-), to the use of questions when what is meant is in fact a negation (strategy b below). An example of the latter strategy is the question made by the Minister's wife: "Has anyone got brains", discussed in 2.4.2, e.g. 4, by means of which she is being aggressive towards her husband and all the new politicians in the government, implying that they have no brains. The underlying contradiction for these cases would be speech act1/speech act2 (question versus negation in this example).

This type of verbal irony could then be subdivided into several substrategies, such as:

- a) Make a request when an order is meant;
- b) make a question when a negation is meant;
- c) accept something when a rejection is meant;
- d) congratulate someone when a reproach is meant;
- e) thank someone when a reproach is meant;
- f) use a declarative speech act to ridicule someone;
- g) use a commissive when in fact the intention is to intimidate the addressee;
- h) praise someone when a criticism is meant.

This list could be enlarged, but I have included those substrategies that I found in the corpora, which I believe to be sufficient for the sake of illustrating contradictory speech acts.

An example of substrategy f is that which served for the acceptance of one part of Hypothesis 3 (namely, that verbal irony can be expressed by using a declarative speech act) and was analysed in 3.4.1.1. An apparent commissive like "Do you want me to throw you out of the window?" is an example of g. Strategy h is used many times together with proposition-oriented verbal irony, in prototypical examples like "you're a fine friend" or "she's clever", when the opposite proposition is intended). One possibility within this sub-type is to praise someone for self-criticism, i.e., to approve of someone when this someone is showing self-contempt, as in this example from the LLC:

```
B      11 2+-+ and I ^have !large _numbers of !sl\ides#           /
a      20 2*I see* +good+                                         /
(B     11 2- in^cluding slides of my w\edding# -                 /
B      11 2^which I :t\ook#                                       /
B      11 2because I re^fused to be !\in them#                  /
a      20 2(laugh)s wise .                                         /
B      11 2^v\ery _wise# .                                         /
B      11 2^I th/ought# -                                         /
B      11 2^why !r\uin the _thing# -                               /
```

(LLC, S.2.1)

In this conversation, a tells B that she was wise for refusing to be in her own wedding slides. B shows self-contempt because she thinks that to appear in the slides would "ruin the thing". Then a is praising B for her self-criticism by using an adjective with an apparent positive connotation to achieve a negative,

criticising meaning. He is telling her that he agrees with her in that she would ruin the thing. The underlying opposition seems to be, thus, positive/negative.

I will only provide one more example, illustrating substrategy d. Here, the Minister's political adviser (Frank Weisel) is very angry with Humphrey (the Minister's secretary) for having imposed his ideas on Hacker, who has just been interviewed on television and has said exactly what Humphrey wanted him to say:

(Humphrey and Weisel are watching the interview on television.)

Humphrey: (claps) Very dignified, very suitable

Weisel: Yes, Sir Humphrey. I congratulate you. Jim is now perfectly house-trained. He says and does exactly what you tell him.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Big Brother")

Weisel is not at all happy with Humphrey's attitude and therefore his intention is evidently not to congratulate but to be reproachful and to express his discontent. In this way he shows his aggressiveness towards Humphrey and indirectly towards Hacker, for not having acted up to his own convictions (consequently becoming Humphrey's puppet).

A 11: Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea

As has already been discussed (in 4.2 and 4.3) and confirmed by means of the quantitative analysis in 7.2.4, there are a considerable number of instances of verbal irony that can be labelled as echoic, given the fact that the speaker is

repeating some previous utterance or idea of the hearer or a third party in order to mock, ridicule or criticize. It was also pointed out and confirmed with the numerical data that not all cases of verbal irony had an echoic nature, and that is why I have included it within a list of possible strategies but not as the only possibility. Within this strategy, there seem to be two main kinds: a) Echo someone's previous utterance and b) Echo someone's thought or ideas.

An example of a) would be example 1 in 4.3.1.1.1, where Humphrey repeats Hacker's exact words ("quite a night") with an ironic, criticising and complaining intention (because he had to work all night). There is here an underlying Positive/Negative opposition, i.e., the positive connotation given to the phrase "quite a night" by Hacker and the negative one given to it by Humphrey.

Example 3 in 4.3.1.1.1 is an instance of b). Dorothy is using here echoic verbal irony without repeating Blanche's exact words; she applies Blanche's idea to another situation with the intention of ridiculing such an idea. The underlying opposition here seems to be that of Agreement/Disagreement (Dorothy does not agree with Blanche, in spite of the fact that she is apparently in agreement with her ideas when echoing them).

A 12: Pretend, Simulate

This is another of the strategies that have already been discussed in this work. In 4.4 and 7.2.5, evidence was

given of ironic utterances which show the speaker is pretending to be the person ridiculed or simulating some kind of situation. As with echoic irony, evidence was also found of the existence of non-pretence irony, which led me to include this possibility as only one more of the possible strategies speakers have at their disposal to express verbal irony.

Several examples of "pretence verbal irony" have been discussed in 4.4.1 and in 4.3 (where echoic and pretence verbal irony co-occured).

Besides pretending to be another person, the speaker using pretence verbal irony may be simulating an act or action he does not intend to accomplish seriously. For instance, in example 2 in 7.2.4, Hacker is pretending to be surprised, but it cannot exactly be said that he is pretending to be Humphrey (the person mocked at), because he uses the pronoun "we" and includes himself in the situation. Thus, two main subdivisions could be made within this category: a) Pretend to be another person, and b) Simulate a given act or situation. Needless to say, both sub-categories may and do co-occur in many cases, but it seems necessary to differentiate between the two since there are instances of pretence irony in which one of them clearly has predominance over the other. The famous utterance "I only know I know nothing" attributed to Socrates, is an example of simulation of a state or situation more than of pretending to be some other person. Socrates was pretending to be ignorant, but it does not appear to be the case that he was simulating identity. The underlying semantic opposition in this case is

that between ignorance and wisdom.

A 13: Use rhetorical questions

This strategy has also been previously discussed and illustrated, in particular in 5.4, when verbal irony is analysed in the light of the Theory of Politeness and with respect to the other strategies (other than "Be ironic") labelled by Brown and Levinson as off record. This strategy goes hand in hand with "Use contradictory speech acts", for the underlying opposition in this type is Speech act1/Speech act2 (realized by Question/Negation, Question/Reproach, Request/Criticism, etc.).

A 14: Give unexpected answers

The opposition underlying this type of ironic strategy is that of Expected/Unexpected. By giving an answer which was not expected as a logical or possible answer to a given question, a speaker may show aggressiveness towards the hearer, as is the case with Sophia's answer to Dorothy's question after finishing her comedy routine:

(Dorothy and Sophia are in the living-room. Sophia has stopwatch and is timing Dorothy's act)

Dorothy: Thank you, and good night.
(Sophia stops watch)
Well, Ma?

Sophia: Five minutes and ten seconds.

Dorothy: Oh, that's a little long. What should I cut?

Sophia: After hearing that act, your throat.

(GG, 1991: 140)

Dorothy is misrepresenting the interpretation of Dorothy's question, and, instead of giving her advice as to what to cut from her act, she advises her to cut her throat, implying in this way that her act had been awful. Verbal irony is found very frequently in adjacency pairs of the type Question/Answer, in some cases to the point of having been conventionalised (as noted in 3.3.1 above and A 29 below).

A 15: Joke, be humorous

I have already discussed the relationship between verbal irony and humour (4.7). Joking may occur both with Negative and Positive Irony. In the case of Negative Irony, the joke may not be taken so humorously by the victim of the speaker's aggressiveness, but it may provoke the laughter of an audience (in the case that there is one) or of a third party. A humorous example of verbal Negative Irony is found in this excerpt from an article published in the British newspaper *The Spectator*, in which its author (Alasdair Palmer) is using humour and joking to express his disbelief of graphology and graphologists and his disagreement with the new fashion followed by some companies of taking on new employees only after they pass the graphology test:

<<Ethics aside, if I wanted a job with Warburg, what would a graphologist tell them about me? Margaret White produced an extensive report, a lot of which I can only call astonishingly perceptive and accurate [...]. My writing shows me to be an "extremely intelligent man who can cleverly associate ideas". (Absolutely right.) I have an "inquisitive and questioning mind" (How true!). I am "an enthusiastic and tenacious man who always does a thorough and

complete job". (Employers please note.) Other claims were less accurate. "I probably enjoy sailing and climbing" (I don't.) And "I do not suffer fools gladly". (I do -I have to. I meet so many in my job).>>

(NA, January 1, 1994)

The authour of this article is making fun of the predictions and visions of the graphologist after analysing his handwriting by joking with the "accuracy" of so much flattering. By saying that she was so perceptive and accurate when speaking about his numerous virtues, he is joking and trying to show his readers that any person of whom so many good things are said after the analysis of his/her handwriting will surely agree with such an analysis. Palmer uses humour to criticize graphologists, and, even though a graphologist reading his article may not find it funny, he knows for sure that there are a great number of other readers whom he will entertain and make laugh. The underlying contrast in this case is that of True/False and/or Belief/Disbelief (although Palmer asserts he believes in what the graphologist has told him by means of expressions like "How true!", he nevertheless does not believe in the accuracy of her report).

A 16: Avoid the lower points of a criticism

This strategy is used to mitigate. As B. Fraser puts it, mitigation "makes a criticism more palatable" (1980: 342). Sometimes it is carried out by simply using an adjective or expression whose meaning is more neutral or less aggressive than the one intended, as was noted in 5.2.2 when quoting Brown &

Levinson's example "He's all right" used to mean "He's awful". In the corpora studied, I have found three main manners by which a speaker can mitigate his criticism and be ironic:

- a) Use a more neutral expression (as in the example above)
- b) Use Hedges
- c) Be ambiguous

Reference to the use of hedges has already been made in previous chapters in relation to some of the examples analysed. In example 3, in 2.4.2, when the two academics refer to the Head of Department as being "a bit idiosyncratic", they are using a more neutral and less strong adjective than the one intended (which could be "lunatic"), they are using a hedge ("a little bit") to mitigate the criticism, and they are being ambiguous at the same time, because they are not using accurate words to express exactly what they mean. The opposition behind the irony is Positive/Negative (more positive concepts than the one intended, which is negative, are expressed).

A 17: Give hints and/or association clues

This has proved to be a rather frequent strategy used by the speakers/writers in the corpora analysed. It was previously mentioned in 5.4, when referring to the other off record strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson in Politeness Theory. The example given there ([1]) is one taken from the BR corpus, in which Russell very elegantly -by means of some hints- leads the reader to make associations between Professors of Philosophy and dictators on the one hand, and lunacy, on the

other. The implied or underlying opposition of this example is Sanity/Madness (he tries to show that some people who are apparently sane are in fact mad and vice versa).

A 18: Use metaphors

This strategy has also been discussed in a previous chapter, in relation to Politeness Theory. Example [7] in 5.4, in which one of the academics ironically refers to the Board of the Faculty as "a sort of Supreme Soviet", displays an instance of ironic metaphor, where the intention of the speaker is to criticise academic structure and its bureaucracy. There is here an underlying opposition between the real and the desired situation (i.e., the bureaucratic structure versus an ideal, non-bureaucratic one).

A 19: Use euphemisms for taboo topics

Euphemisms can be also metaphorical, as Brown & Levinson (1987: 216) note, and this is the case of example [1] in 5.2.3, where Dorothy used the euphemism (and metaphor) "pillow talk" to avoid saying "sexual intercourse". Here, Dorothy is being aggressive towards Blanche by insinuating that her dates usually end in bed with the man in question. The underlying contrast or opposition is Meaning1/Meaning2 (the literal meaning of "pillow talk" versus its metaphorical, euphemistic meaning).

A 20: Displace the hearer

An example of this strategy was given in 5.4 (e.g 10),

also in relation to Politeness Theory. Another illustrative example of this strategy is Sophia's last remark in the following interchange:

Dorothy: I can't believe it. Blanche has gone without for two weeks. I mean, that's like Raymond Burr saying "No gravy".

Rose: What do you think's the matter with her?

Sophia: May be when she had that out-of-body experience she didn't get back in all the way.

(the other girls give Sophia a contemptuous look, so Sophia "addresses the wall" and says:)

Try to discuss science with kids.

(GG, 1991: 188)

When the other girls look at Sophia in such a way as to tell her that what she is saying is ridiculous, she resorts to irony by displacing them (because she does not address them in her reply) and also by giving association clues: to speak with them about out-of-body experiences is like discussing science with kids. She responds with aggressiveness to their aggressive look and bases her irony on the underlying opposition Wisdom/Ignorance (she tries to contrast her knowledge with their ignorance about spiritual matters).

A 21: Say what something or somebody is not (instead of saying what it is)

There are cases in which to refer to a person, thing or situation in a direct, assertive way may strongly offend the hearer; therefore, the speaker may choose the indirect, ironic strategy of saying what that person, thing or situation is not, and leave it up to the hearer to understand what the speaker

thinks of the question or what it really is. Consider Sophia's remark in this dyad:

Blanche: Oh, but Dorothy, you don't get it. My accountant reminded me that I've been audited before and I've never had to pay a penny in back taxes. I have a way with auditors. the last time I was audited I got money back from the government.

Sophia: Blanche, it's not a refund when the auditor leaves two twenties on your nightstand.

(GG, 1991: 140)

Saying what a refund is not is an indirect form of aggressiveness which is milder than directly telling Blanche that the money left on her nightstand was a payment for her sexual favours (which is the implicated criticism in this case). The implied opposition may be that of True/False (the true meaning of "refund" versus Blanche's "misinterpretation" of the term).

A 22: Be incomplete, use ellipsis

This is another strategy already discussed in relation to Politeness Theory. The phrase "With friends like this..." used in an incomplete way (without the subsequent question "Who needs enemies?" was given as an example. This strategy is also connected to pauses and strategic silence, elements that have also been touched on in this piece of work (6.3.4) as instances of prosodic features signalling the presence of verbal irony.

A 23: Use tautologies

Though not found as a strategy in the corpora, it was

noted in 5.4 that this seems to be a possible strategy, considering the example heard from two academics (see discussion of off record strategy n° 6) where the tautology used is also an instance of echoic irony employed as a form of "revenge" on the addressee.

A 24: Say less than required or expected, understate

This strategy was implicitly touched on when discussing those cases of verbal irony which violate the Maxim of Quantity. In a similar way to that of strategy A 19, the speaker may here leave the implicature "hanging in the air", as is also the case with rhetorical questions. Example 2 in 5.2.2, in which Humphrey tells Bernard that he can also keep a secret after having asked him if he could keep one, is very representative and shows an instance of verbal irony based on the opposition Expected/Unexpected (Bernard expected Humphrey to tell him a secret, but Humphrey did not do it). Here Humphrey expresses mild aggressiveness by implicating that he does not trust Bernard.

A 25: Overstate, exaggerate

Exaggeration appears to be a rather common and frequent feature in ironic discourse. Within Negative irony, it is not rare to find speakers exaggerating the aspects they are criticising in order to give more emphasis, and, in many instances, more fun and humour to their remarks. Some authors have included this feature in their definition of irony as an

essential part of it (as King & Crerar (1969), quoted in 2.3.1). I have referred in particular to this strategy in 5.2.2 and 5.4, example n° 5, in which, after Blanche's comment that her boyfriend is five years younger than she is, Dorothy exaggerates and uses the rhetorical questions "In what, Blanche? Dog years?" to mean that Blanche was lying and that she wouldn't be cheated by her. Dorothy is showing her aggressiveness once more, in this case by using the opposition Belief/Disbelief or True/False (she wants to show that she does not believe in the truth of Blanche's statement).

In those cases in which the speaker chooses to resort to pretence to express verbal irony, it is not rare to find exaggeration at the same time; imitation of someone's flaws is accompanied by an exaggeration of such flaws more often than not. This exaggeration may form part of the meanings of the words used, or it may be implicit in the prosody of the discourse utilised: heavy stress, high pitch, etc. (see chapter 6).

Another example of ironic written discourse where exaggeration plays an important part is found in this excerpt from the British newspaper *The Sunday Telegraph*, where its author, Sean Langan, is criticizing the new American telephone service called "Psyche-line", by which the user is given psychological advice costing him/her 3.99 dollars per minute, as well as other similar services on computers or video (the whole article has an ironic tone):

<<One innovation in technological psychiatry at least offers face-to-face contact, albeit on video. A Boston psychiatrist films couples during their marriage

guidance sessions and, afterwards, they can take the video home and relive the experience. In the U.S., of course, everyone wants to be in a movie, even if it is about their own imminent divorce. It could only happen in America and, at the prices they're charging, only with the help of your American Express card.>>

(NA, January 1, 1994)

The author is exaggerating by using expressions such as "of course" before exaggerating again by saying that "everyone wants to be in a movie in the U.S., even if it is about their own imminent divorce". He is criticising what he considers to be an American generalised flaw, namely, superficiality or frivolity, by presenting at the same time the opposition Spiritual/Material (it is ironic that one should have to spend so much money to solve a psychological, spiritual problem).

A 26: Append an unexpected afterthought or aftercomment to your or your interlocutor's utterance

The inclusion of an unexpected, contrasting aftercomment appended to a given contribution or utterance seems to be a relatively frequent strategy used when the speaker or writer wants to express ironic meanings. As an illustration, consider Sophia's remark when the girls are listening to Dorothy's comments on how good she used to be at telling jokes at school:

Dorothy: The kids really liked me. I mean, they laughed. I felt great.

Blanche: Oh, Dorothy, if there's something you're aching to do, then you simply have to do it. Do you remember when we went to amateur night at the Comedy Barrel? Honey, I

know you've got to be as good as some of those people.
Dorothy: I couldn't. I'm... I'd be up there sweating bullets.
Sophia: And dodging some.

(GG, 1991: 135)

Sophia adds her comment as if it were a continuation of Dorothy's previous comment, taking the word "bullets" -which is used figuratively in the expression "sweating bullets"- in its literal meaning. In this way, Sophia makes an indirect, pungent criticism of Dorothy's skills as a joke teller. Sophia's remark makes the hearer retrieve two mental frames in relation to two different uses of the word "bullet", which seems to put the opposition Meaning1/Meaning 2 as the principal underlying one in this example.

A 27: Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution (associate positive meanings with negative ones or vice versa)

Speakers or writers sometimes handle their vocabulary in such a way that the hearer or reader encounters words or expressions which have a positive connotation associated in a strange and contrastive manner to other words or expressions having a negative connotation. This is what B. Russell does in the following excerpt:

<<The Church in recent years has been softening its doctrines on eternal damnation, but it has done so entirely owing to attacks from the unorthodox. In the present day, the opposition of the church to birth control, if it could be successful, would mean that poverty and starvation must forever be the lot of mankind unless alleviation is brought by the hydrogen bomb.>>

(BR, 1958: 56)

When writing about romantic verbal irony, Enright (1988: 15) notes: "Affirm and deny in one sentence and, you too can be a romantic ironist". Using words having a positive semantic load mixed up with other words having a negative one is also a manifestation of this possibility. If we analyse this passage by Russell, we shall find that an adjective like "successful", which has a positive connotation, is associated with negative concepts like "poverty and starvation". It is striking and ironic that success will bring about unwanted situations such as poverty and starvation. Russell continues to use the same strategy immediately after, when he writes of "alleviation" (a noun with a positive semantic load) as being the consequence of "the hydrogen bomb" (a negatively-loaded nominal group). It seems contradictory to think that such a pernicious thing as a bomb may bring alleviation to mankind. Russell makes use of this strategy to show his aggressiveness towards and disagreement with the church as regards birth control. Handling positive and negative meanings together produces a clashing, striking and contrastive effect. Thus, we can speak here of the underlying opposition Success/Failure (what appears to be a success is a failure).

A 28: Make use of inverted commas, bold type, italisation or punctuation marks to signal certain key terms or expressions in written discourse

This strategy has already been discussed and illustrated in 6.5, example [1], where I quote Josh Young in an article criticising the church of Scientology, in which one of

the strategies he uses to show irony is the use of inverted commas on the word "enlightenment". These inverted commas also help the reader realize that he is echoing the church members' words and that he does not agree with them that their courses are precisely on "enlightenment". The opposition which is latent in this particular example is the Material/ Spiritual one (for, as was explained in 6.5, the creator of the church became a multimillionaire after giving these courses).

It appears to be the case that this strategy is a rather frequent one within written ironic discourse.

A 29: Make use of some prosodic features (such as stress, high pitch, intonation, laughter, pauses, etc) in spoken language.

A whole chapter has been devoted to the use of prosodic features as a means to signal verbal irony. Several substrategies may be derived here, which I have already discussed in chapter 6, namely:

- 1- Use a given tone (see 6.2)
- 2- Use heavy stress (see 6.3.1)
- 3- Increase the pitch level of some key words (see 6.3.2)
- 4- Laugh:
 - a) Laugh after or before an ironic remark (see 6.3.3)
 - b) Laugh sarcastically (see 6.3.3)
- 5- Locate silence or pauses strategically (see 6.3.4)

It was also noted in Chapter 6 that certain prosodic features such as nasalisation or breathy voice can also mark irony, but they have not been studied here because these features are not marked in the corpus used (LLC).

The general underlying dichotomy behind this strategy is Prominence/Non-prominence (prosodic features serve the purpose of giving prominence to certain terms or expressions that would otherwise be non-prominent).

A 30: Use conventionalised verbal irony

Within this strategy, there are two main substrategies (which were somehow distinguished in 3.3):

- 1) Use conventionalised ironic words or expressions
- 2) Use conventionalised ironic strategies

It was noted in 3.3 that there are some cases of verbal irony in which the implicature leading to the ironic interpretation has been "short-circuited" and therefore the irony now has a conventionalised status (for these implicatures are no longer cancellable). In the case of a), I made reference to expressions such as "A likely story" always meaning "an unlikely story", therefore showing aggressiveness and disbelief towards the person who told the story. As regards b), I have found some conventionalised strategies in the corpora which, at the micro-level of analysis, could be considered as two successive turns organized into so-called adjacency pairs (Schlegloff, 1987), which are generally of the type Question/Answer. The ones found in this research are the following:

- a) Answer an obvious question with an even more obvious question, to convey that the first one was stupid or need not have been made.
- b) Reply to a lie with an even bigger lie to show that you are not being cheated.

- c) Reply to a stupid question with an even more stupid answer.
- d) Ask a question and give a ridiculous answer before the hearer can answer himself, to show that s/he is doing or saying something ridiculous.

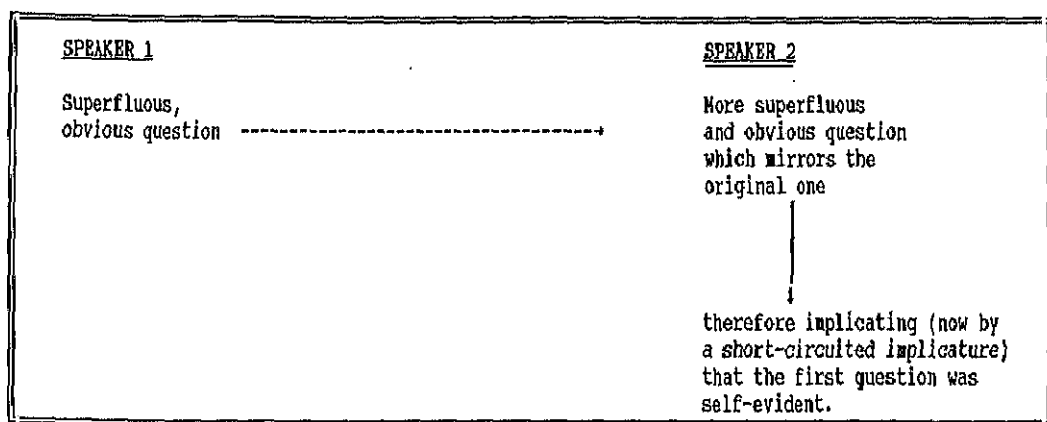
There is only one of the conventionalised substrategies found which does not manifest itself through an adjacency pair, namely,

- e) Use the formula "If p, then q = not p" (when the main clause q carries an absurd proposition).

I now turn to each of these substrategies in particular.

a) The prototypical example of a) is the well-known question "Is the Pope catholic?" used as an answer to a very obvious question, as has already been noted in 3.3.1. Norrick (1992) notes that everyone has personal favourites in this class and provides the question (which is used as an answer) "Does a bear shit in the woods?" as another of the classics. The fact that everyone has his favourite in this type of ironic answer seems to confirm my argument that what has been conventionalised here is the strategy, and not always the words used. This strategy is graphically represented in Figure 8a.

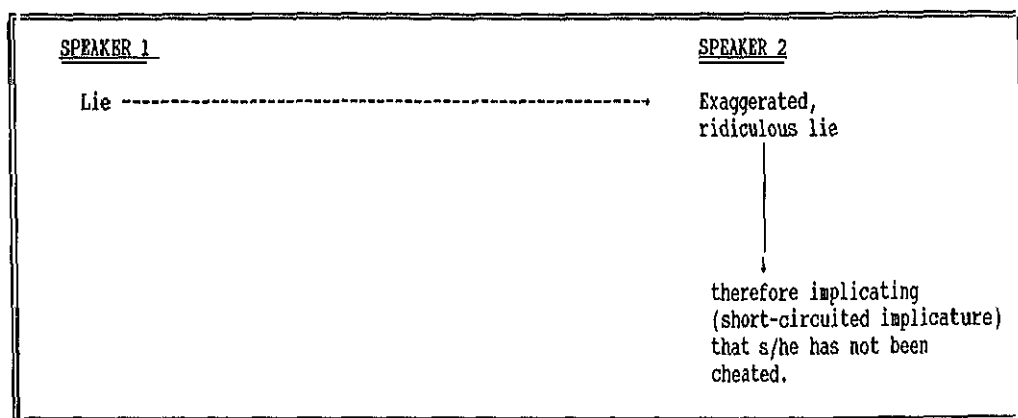
Figure 8a: Conventionalised substrategy a): Answer an obvious question with an even more obvious question



The opposition behind this strategy is one between the speech acts used (Speech act 1/Speech act 2), for this is also a case of speech act-oriented verbal irony, in which the speech act given by speaker 2 is neither the one intended nor the one expected as an answer by speaker 1.

b) This strategy has also been discussed in 3.3.1. A prototypical example is the statement "yes, and I'm Mary the Queen of Romania" as a reply to what the speaker considers to be his/her interlocutor's lie. Figure 8b illustrates this substrategy.

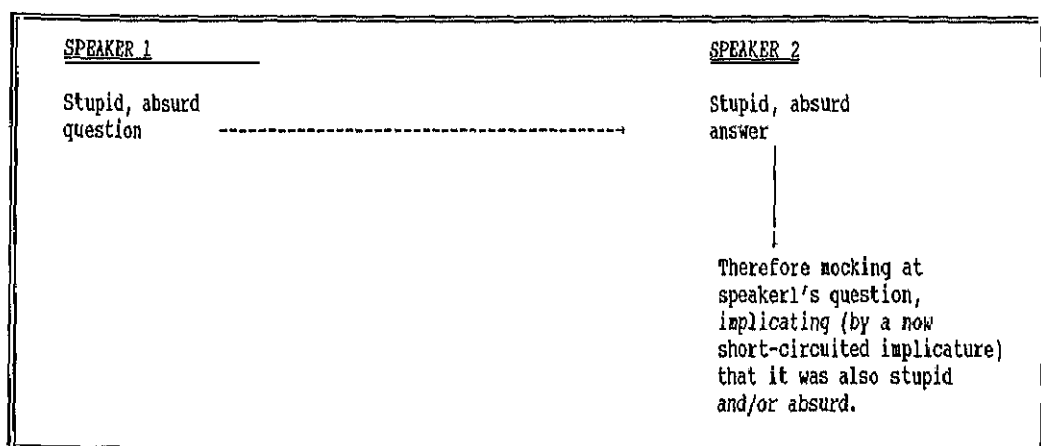
Figure 8b: Conventionalised ironic substrategy b): Reply to a lie with an even bigger lie



As the figure shows, speaker 2 is lying too, but his intention is not to cheat speaker 1; on the contrary, he lies in an exaggerated way, so that its untruthfulness becomes self-evident and serves the purposes of mirroring speaker 1's lie in order to tell him that he does not believe what speaker 1 is saying. The underlying oppositions here seem to be True/False and Belief/Disbelief.

c) Examples of this substrategy have already been given in 3.3.1 (e.g.s 3, 4 and 5). The mechanism of the strategy is illustrated in Figure 8c.

Figure 8c: Conventionalised ironic substrategy c): Reply to a stupid question with an even more stupid answer



Obviously, speaker 2's intention here is not to answer speaker 1's question but to show his aggressiveness by telling speaker 1 that his question should not have been formulated, given its absurd character. The underlying opposition in this case is Expected/Unexpected (speaker 1 expects an answer other than the one given by speaker 2).

d) As regards d, I have observed that, on some occasions, speakers show a certain degree of aggressive irony by asking a question and giving an exaggerated, ridiculous answer (in the form of a question to show that their interlocutor is doing or saying something ridiculous. A prototypical case could be the questions: "Where are you going? To the North Pole?", when the speaker wants to criticise his interlocutor's exaggerated precautions as regards cold weather (for example if s/he is taking too many suitcases full of thick clothes and blankets on

a trip). An example from one of the corpora here studied is the following:

(Sophia enters from the kitchen with food. Sneaks toward hallway. Dorothy enters from hallway).

Dorothy: Ma, where are you going with all that food?

Sophia: I'm taking it to my room.

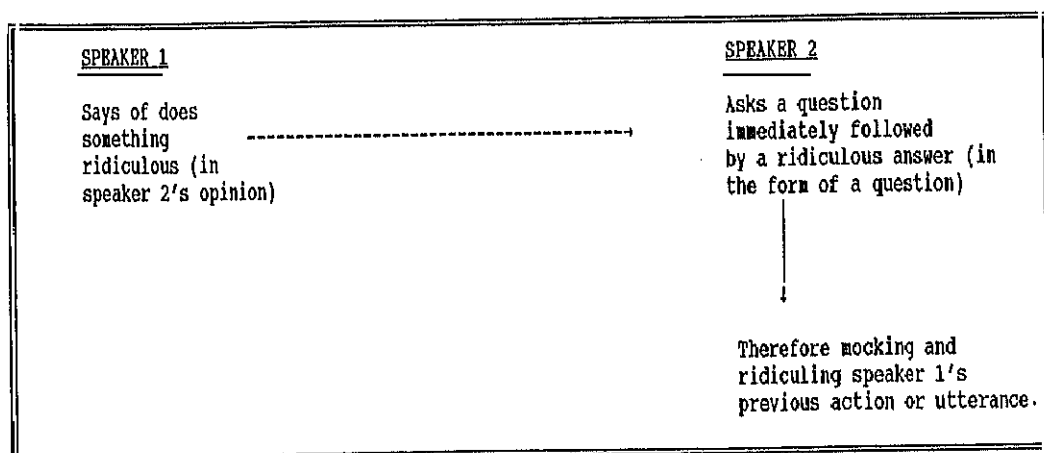
Dorothy: Who have you got in there, Shelley Winters?

(GG, 1991: 62)

By making reference to Shelley Winters (a fat actress that had a reputation for eating in an exaggerated way), Dorothy is implicating that her mother is doing something ridiculous. Exaggeration is a key strategy in this particular example. Dorothy exaggerates to show that her mother is exaggerating too. In a way (and as in the previous substrategies analysed here) she is *mirroring* what her mother is doing in order to mock her.

The underlying opposition in this example seems to be that existing between a real and a contrived situation, the real situation being that the mother is hungry and wants to take a lot of food to her room to have a quiet meal and Dorothy's imaginary situation depicting Shelley Winters locked in her mother's room. This strategy can be illustrated as shown in Figure 8d.

Figure 8d: Conventionalised substrategy d: Ask a question and give a ridiculous answer before the hearer can answer himself.



e) The formula "If p, then q = not p" was discussed in 3.3.1, where the example "If she is pretty, I'm the King of France" was used to illustrate the fact that what the speaker means in this case is that she is not pretty. It was also noted that there is a precondition for this formula to be valid, namely, that q (the main clause) carries an absurd proposition. An interesting use of this strategy is made by Bertrand Russell in this passage:

<<If you wish to persuade people that because Adam ate an apple, all who have never heard of this interesting occurrence will be roasted in an everlasting fire by a benevolent Deity, you must catch them young, make them stupid by means of drink or drugs, and carefully isolate them from all contact with books or companions capable of making them think.>>

(BR, 1958: 58)

The formula in this example is expressed in more than two propositions, but what Russell wants to signify can be reduced to the general "If p, then q = not p": he suggests an absurd and ridiculous way of making people believe in everlasting damnation

(as a consequence of Adam's eating of the apple) as the only possible way of making somebody believe such a thing, therefore implicating that such a belief is also ridiculous and absurd. Apart from this conventionalised strategy used by Russell here, there are also other strategies present, such as the use of related positive and negative meanings, or the use of non-core words (such as "roasted").

The dichotomy of contradictions behind this sub-strategy is the True/False one, for the speaker wants to prove the falsity of *p*, by presenting a proposition *q*, which is even more difficult to believe; and these are both opposed to what the writer considers to be the truth.

Another, more typical example is found in Sophia's comment in the following conversation in which the girls are planning a strategy to raise some funds:

Dorothy: What's wrong Blanche?

Blanche: Oh, Dorothy, nobody gives a damn about this "Save the Wetlands" thing. I sat in that booth of ours at the mall for three hours, not one soul came by and asked for information. What we need is some kind of swamp gimmick-like "guess how many leeches are in the jar".

Dorothy: I don't think so, Blanche.

Blanche: All right then. All right. How about a celebrity auction?

Sophia: Hey, if you could but a celebrity at an auction, I'd be showering every morning with Trini Lopez.

(GG, 1991: 199)

Sophia misinterpreted the meaning of "a celebrity auction", thinking that it is an auction where one can buy celebrities, and therefore wanted to express how absurd this idea sounded to her

by putting forward a ridiculous proposition that would be thought as the consequence of the first one: "If it were true that one can buy celebrities at auctions (which is absurd), I would buy Trini Lopez there (which is also absurd)" . The absurdity and non-truthfulness of the second proposition invalidates the truth value of the first one.

A 31: Make use of implicature-free verbal irony (worked out of the conventional meanings of some terms or expressions used)

Within this strategy fall those cases of implicature-free irony discussed in 7.2.2, where it was noted that apart from having found a conversational and a conventionalised type of verbal irony, there was evidence in the corpora in favour of a third kind of verbal irony which was to be worked out from the conventional implicatures of some of the words or expressions used. As was explained in 7.2.2, sometimes there are inherent contradictions in the conventional implicatures of the expressions used, such as in the famous Socratic remark "I only know I know nothing", which expresses irony without it being necessary for the hearer to work out any implicatures, with the underlying opposition being Ignorance/Wisdom in this particular case. But this example does not belong in the category of aggressive irony; it is, in fact, an instance of neutral irony. Martin's example, quoted also in 7.2.2 ("Our friends are always there when they need us") as well as the corpus examples 3 and 4 in the same section, show an aggressive, criticising attitude on the part of the speaker. As can be seen, the same strategy

may be used for any of the three main types of verbal irony proposed in this chapter, i.e., sometimes the same strategy may serve the purposes of a criticising, negative speaker, those of a positive, praising speaker, or those of a neutral one.

No more discussion is considered necessary here, for this issue has been widely analysed and tested with corpus examples in 7.2.2.

I now turn to the substrategies of the second of the three main types of verbal irony, namely, Positive Irony.

8.4.2 Positive Verbal Irony: Show positive feelings (praise, admiration, etc.) towards yourself, the hearer, a third party or a situation

The possibility of the existence of a type of verbal irony which does not convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker has already been discussed in 4.3.1.2 and 5.3.1. Very few examples of Positive verbal irony were found in the corpora, all of which I shall analyse here under the appropriate substrategies. I shall also include some other examples to which I have already made reference in other chapters and/or which have been taken into account by other authors as instances of verbal irony conveying praise and/or addressing the positive face of the hearer or a third party (in Brown & Levinson's terms).

The substrategies within Positive Irony will be labelled with the letter B and a number.

B 1: Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance

As with Negative irony, this strategy includes prototypical cases like those given by Haverkate (1988), namely, "I don't like you at all", meaning "I like you very much" and "Oh, how small you have grown!", said to a child in admiration for how tall s/he is now as compared to the last time the speaker saw him/her. The underlying opposition here is the same as that of the same substrategy for Negative irony: True/False or Literal/Intended Meaning.

B 2: Say less than required, understate

Examples within this strategy belong to the conversational type of verbal irony, for they display a violation of the maxim of Quantity. In the case of Positive irony, the speaker avoids the higher points of a compliment, as the author of the following excerpt from an article published in *The Sunday Times* does:

<<The young autograph-hunters were quick to approach the glamorous figure of Gigi Fernandez during the Brighton tournament last October. Not one, however, thought it worth asking for the signature of her companion. Perhaps somebody should have told them that the Wimbledon champion, Conchita Martinez, can play a bit too.>>

(NA, January 1, 1995)

It is ironic to say that a Wimbledon champion "can play a bit" of tennis. The writer here means that Conchita Martínez can play more than a bit; she can play very well in fact. The underlying opposition for this example could be one showing contradictory

quantities (Much/A bit) or one showing contradictory abilities (play Bad/Well or Skill/Non-skill).

B 3: Make use of conventionalised ironic terms or expressions

I have made reference in previous chapters to the expression "Break a leg" used by theatre actors as an expression of a wish for good luck before a colleague appears on the stage. I have also explained (3.3.1) that it has become conventionalised, for it could not be replaced by any other (like "break an arm", for example) and therefore the implicature has been short-circuited and is no longer cancellable. The speaker is using here an apparent expression of bad wishes to cause the opposite effect: wish a person good luck, the opposition behind it thus being Positive/Negative, or, in a more superficial level, Good luck/Bad luck (what seems to be a negative wish is in fact a positive wish of good luck).

B 4: Joke

"Joke" may also be a strategy within positive irony. A speaker may use this strategy with the intention of praising or expressing some positive evaluation of the hearer or a third party. The following chunk of dialogue has already been quoted in 5.3.2 as an example of verbal irony used in combination with positive politeness:

(B	11	^pr\ogramming (com^p\uters#)# -	/
B	11	*(((^th\at's what /I do#))*	/
A	11	*^y\es#	/
A	11	do* ^you know 'Malcolm B\owen#	/
A	11	^over at the comp\uter /unit#	/

B 11 ^[\m]#
 A 11 ^nice b/oy# -
 A 11 ^sure !he'd h/elp you#
 A 11 if you ^got st\uck#
 B 20 (- - laughs) -

/

(LLC, S.1.6)

A is joking, for he, in fact, intends to say that B will not need any help and that it will not be very likely that he gets stuck, considering that his job consists precisely in programming computers. Therefore A is trying to show a positive evaluation of B's abilities and skills in his job. The underlying opposition being thus the general Speech Act 1/Speech Act 2, and the more specific Compliment/Criticism. The same holds for Brown & Levinson's example: "How about lending me this old heap of junk?" (1987: 124) quoted in 5.3.1, where the "old heap of junk" is a brand new Cadillac, which makes the hearer infer that the speaker means quite the opposite.

B 5: Use contradictory speech acts

The example in B 2 is also an instance of this strategy, for, what seems to be a mild criticism is intended to be a compliment. The same holds for the examples in B 1 and B 2.

B 6: Insult the hearer (to show you consider him/her as a member of your peer group and/or to build solidarity)

This strategy appears to be more culture-dependent than any of the other ones, for not every speaker of English can use it and be successful. The speaker should belong to certain

micro-cultures that have agreed on the use of rudeness as a sign of membership and solidarity within the group. I have already discussed this form of Positive irony in 5.3.1. I refer to the "Ritual Insults" used by New York black adolescents described by Lavob (1972) or to the "flyting" of some joking relationships in some English dialects described by Booth (1974). I have not found any instances of this strategy in the corpora, for none of the speakers and writers in them belong to any of these groups; but, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter I thought that the fact of not being in the corpora was not an argument strong enough to warrant disregarding its existence. The underlying opposition of this strategy can be Positive/Negative, or, at a more superficial level, Rudeness/Politeness (what seems to be rude, negative language is in fact "polite" language expressing positive feelings).

B 7: Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea

Although I have not found examples of this strategy within Positive irony in the corpora analysed, I am including it also as a possibility within Positive irony due to the number of times I have experienced its use among English speakers. The example given in 5.3.1 about a student who thought she would fail the exam and whose friend (after knowing she had succeeded) told her "she was an awful student" is one of these "overheard" instances of echoic Positive irony I am referring to. Similar to this is the case in which a young adolescent is convinced that she is fat when she is, in fact, very thin, an attitude to which

her mother or any objective observer of her physical condition may ironically reply: "Oh yes, you are extremely fat", and, by saying this, the hearer/s will realize that the speaker is echoing the girl's words to mock her idea and to mean that she is not fat at all. In fact, as in the case of the exam, there is here an overlapping of both Negative and Positive irony, for the speaker is criticising the hearer's negative attitude towards herself, and, at the same time, is trying to tell her that she has a positive evaluation of the hearer.

B 8: Other possible strategies

Some other of the strategies described with respect to Negative irony can surely be used to express Positive irony too. For instance, the handling of prosodic features in spoken language and of inverted commas, bold type, punctuation marks, etc. in written language, are no doubt available alternatives. However, since Positive irony is a much less frequent phenomenon than Negative irony, it does not seem appropriate to speculate further on its possibilities, considering the fact that, for the time being (as far as the findings of this investigation are concerned), there is lack of evidence of its realization through the other strategies considered for Negative irony. Thus, I shall proceed to the description of the strategies found for the third main kind of verbal irony, namely, Neutral Verbal Irony.

8.4.3 Neutral Verbal Irony

Neutral irony has proved to be slightly more frequent than Positive irony in the corpora studied. Reference to this type of irony has already been made in 5.3.3. I shall now refer to the substrategies of this type found in the corpora examples. All the Neutral irony examples will be labelled with the letter C and a number.

C 1: Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your contribution or utterance

The very essence of irony is seen in this strategy. Contradiction (at any level) is the permanent ingredient in the irony recipe. In spite of the fact that most of the examples from *The Golden Girls* belong to the Negative type, there is one instance in which its only identifying element is contradiction and absurdity, without showing any apparently positive or negative attitude on the part of Dorothy (the ironist in this case):

[1]

Dorothy: Rose, you're here. That's good. I am absolutely snowed under with this Wetlands thing. And as usual, I know I can count on you.

Rose: I'm sorry, Dorothy.

Dorothy: What? But, Rose, you always help out with these things. You're involved in all the charities. You sent a contribution to "Save the Rich".

(GG, 1991: 197)

The irony of Dorothy's last remark is inferred from the clashing concepts in it: it is contradictory to send contributions to rich

people and even more contradictory and absurd that there exists a charity called "Save the Rich". This is a case in which the writers of the episode (Tracy Gamble and Richard Vaczy) introduce irony for the sake of humour, but it cannot be said that this irony shows any special attitude (negative or positive) on the part of the speaker (Dorothy).

Most of the examples of Neutral irony found in the corpora are instances of this strategy. In the following conversation from an episode of the *Yes Minister* series, we encounter two examples of this type of irony:

[1]

Bernard: But what's wrong with open government? I mean, why shouldn't the public know more about what's going on?

Arnold: Are you serious?

Bernard: Well, yes sir, it is the Minister's policy after all.

Arnold: Mind avoiding a contradiction in terms. You can be open or you can have government.

Bernard: But surely the citizens of a democracy have the right to know.

Humphrey: No, they have a right to be ignorant. Knowledge only means complicity and guilt. Ignorance has a certain dignity.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

There is irony in Arnold's remark on the impossibility of having government and being open at the same time ("you can be open or you can have government", where the "or" is exclusive). The episode is all about the "open government" policy of the Minister (Hacker) and it turns out to be that, according to Arnold's view, "open" and "government" are contradictory terms. Humphrey then

extends the irony by associating positive and negative terms, namely "knowledge" with "complicity" and "guilt" and "ignorance" with "dignity".

C 2: Joke

The examples presented as neutral in 2.4 and 4.3.1.2, namely Pascal's *I made the letter longer than usual because I didn't have the time to make it shorter*, or Auden's *we are all here on Earth to help each other, but what the others are here for, God only knows*, are both examples of irony used with the intention of amusing the reader. In fact, the writer is showing his witticism by joking. These two examples also fit in the first strategy (C 1), for they include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements.

Another example of neutral irony in which the speaker is joking is found in Hacker's wife's remark in the following chunk of dialogue, where Hacker is very nervous because he knows he has entered the Ministry, but he has not had the call from the Prime Minister yet:

Wife: It sounds as if you're about to enter the Ministry.

Hacker: Yes, but which Ministry. That's the whole point.

Wife: It was a joke!

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

The wife uses the hedge "It sounds as if" in order to joke and make fun of her husband's state of anxiety, but, in fact, she knows for sure that he has entered the Ministry. The wife is only joking, she does not intend to criticise or to praise him.

Her attitude seems to be neutral. This is one of the cases of mild irony in which hedges like "it sounds", or "it seems" are used to point out evident situations.

C 3: Hedge

As has just been pointed out, the above example (in C2) is also an instance of this strategy. Hacker's wife uses the expression "it sounds as if.." as a hedge to her ironic remark. Hedges seem to be one of the favourite elements of ironists.

C 4: Exaggerate, overstate

The violation of the Quantity Maxim is also possible within Neutral irony. In the following conversation between Hacker and John (an ex-minister), John shows irony through exaggeration, but he apparently has no intention of criticising or showing contempt. He takes the civil service tricks as natural facts, without judging them, although it certainly could be noted here that the attitude of the authors of the episode is negative. Thus we should distinguish between the authors' and the character's intention, the former being negative, the latter being neutral.

Hacker: Look John. You were in office for years; you know all civil service tricks

John: Oh, not all of them boy, just a few hundred.

Hacker: How did you defeat them? How do you make them do something they don't want to do?

John: My dear fellow, if I knew that, I wouldn't be the opposition
(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Economy Drive")

John is exaggerating and joking when saying that the tricks he knows are not all of them and that they are "just a few hundred". His words imply that the tricks of the civil service are many more than a few hundred. However, as he himself is a member of the civil service, his intention is not to criticise, he is only making a witty comment. There is, however, Negative irony on the part of the writers of the episode. These authors are mocking the civil service by showing that, for civil servants, it is a natural thing to play tricks on the people.

C 5: Use rhetorical questions

C 6: Use contradictory speech acts

These two strategies are dealt with together here because the example of Neutral irony that will be analysed is an instance of their co-occurrence. In this conversation between two female academics, C makes a lot of comments on how, in London, one is often in a hurry and also wastes a lot of time and on the fact that the place itself does not encourage anyone to rest. That is why her question is understood as ironical, for she is asking when, in fact, she means the negation of the proposition: she does not want to know whether A rests in London; she thinks that she certainly can not do it.

A 11 but I ^think you 'find that 'what you :need in /
A 11 'college is a :sense of "r\est# . /
A 11 ((cos)) ^that's the !one thing ((you 'hope to)) /
A 11 g\et ((in a 'picture r/eally#)) . /
A 11 there's ^\always 'something to 'do in L/ondon# . /
C 11 do you ^rest in 'London at \all# -

(LLC, S.1.8)

C shows her disbelief by means of a question. The oppositions Belief/Disbelief and Speech Act 1 (question)/Speech Act 2 (negation) are the basis of the ironical interpretation. The falling-rising intonation of the question may be also a clue to its ironic interpretation (see Chapter 6). C's remark, thus, shows a certain degree of irony but shows neither aggressiveness nor any kind of positive attitude towards the hearer or any other person. That is why I have classified this example as neutral.

C 7: Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution

This strategy has already been illustrated within Neutral irony in example n° 2 in C 1.

C 8: Use implicature-free verbal irony

The strategy of being ironic without violating any of the Gricean Maxims seems to be also possible within the Neutral kind of irony. An illustration of this possibility is found in Humphrey's statement in the following chunk of conversation:

[1]

Humphrey: You came up with all the questions I hoped nobody could ask.

Hacker: Well, opposition is about asking awkward questions.

Humphrey: And Government is about not answering them.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

When Humphrey says that "government is about not answering questions", he is being ironic without showing any kind of

positive or negative attitude towards the hearer or the audience (being neutral) and also by telling the truth without apparently violating any of the other Gricean Maxims. Even though Humphrey answered the questions, his idea is that the government should never give clear answers to questions, and this is what he in fact did, for his answers were ambiguous and obscure, which is in contradiction with the principles of an ideal government but, nevertheless, in agreement with his conception of what a government should be like. The underlying contradiction here is that of the real versus a desired situation. Humphrey always outdoes Hacker's wit with his witty, ironical comments.

C 9: Echo somebody's utterance, thought or idea

In the example of neutral irony discussed in C 8, Humphrey's remark is also an instance of echoic verbal irony. He is not echoing Hacker's thought or idea, but he is echoing the structure used by Hacker in his previous utterance ("X is about y").

C 10: Use inverted commas, italics, etc. (in written irony)

C 11: Use non-core vocabulary

The following is an instance of verbal written irony in which its author, B. Russell, makes use of both italics and a non-core word ("chic") as strategies to unravel his ironical intentions. Russell is neither criticising nor praising anybody; there seems to be no face threatening of any participant, and, from there, my characterization of this example as neutral:

<<I was told that the Chinese said they would bury me by the Western Lake and build a shrine to my memory. I have some slight regret that this did not happen, as I might have become a God, which would have been very *chic* for an atheist.>>

(BR, 1958: 59)

Russell is using both verbal and situational irony in this passage. He in fact does not regret not having become a God (for as he explains, he was an atheist), and, at the same time, he plays with the imaginary and ironic situation of a shrine being built in memory of an atheist person like himself. The use of the non-core word "*chic*" , as well as its italization, are strategies used by Russell to make his ironic intentions more prominent. The underlying contrast of this ironic example is Religion/Atheism.

C 12: Other possible strategies

As with Positive verbal irony, the strategies found in the corpora for Neutral irony are less numerous than those found for Negative irony, due to the fact that these types of irony are much less frequent than the Negative kind (see 8.6). Therefore, I shall not speculate about other possible strategies, although it seems reasonable and logical to suppose that there may be other strategies within the neutral kind of irony that might occur in other examples not appearing in the corpora studied.

Having, thus, presented the taxonomy of strategies proposed as a result of this investigation, I now turn to the quantitative analysis of such strategies. Figures 8e, 8f and 8g summarize all the strategies discussed and explained in the proposal.

Figure 8e: Substrategies within Negative verbal irony (found in this study)

A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY

- A1 Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance
- A2 Use a proposition which is contrary to general belief, but not contrary to what you mean
- A3 Use a proposition you consider as true but which is opposite to the one considered as true by the hearer
- A4 Show in your utterance that you have interpreted your interlocutor's statement as having an opposite meaning
- A5 Use formal language and affected vocabulary when it is not apparently required by the situation or context
- A6 Use words or expressions that have a somewhat different (though not opposite) meaning to the one conveyed
- A7 Use puns: Make the hearer retrieve two mental frames
- A8 Use suffixes that indicate certain degree of derision
- A9 Change the name of somebody (nickname) or something deliberately
- A10 Use contradictory speech acts
- A11 Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea
- A12 Pretend, simulate
- A13 Use rhetorical questions
- A14 Give unexpected answers
- A15 Joke, be humorous
- A16 Avoid the lower points of a criticism
- A17 Give hints and/or association clues
- A18 Use metaphors
- A19 Use euphemisms
- A20 Displace the hearer
- A21 Say what something or somebody is not
- A22 Be incomplete, use ellipsis
- A23 Use tautologies
- A24 Say less than required or expected, understate
- A25 Overstate, exaggerate
- A26 Append an unexpected afterthought or aftercomment to your utterance or to that of your interlocutor
- A27 Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution
- A28 Make use of inverted commas, bold type, italization, punctuation marks, etc. to signal certain key terms or expressions in written discourse
- A29 Make use of some prosodic features such as stress, high pitch, intonation, laughter, pauses, etc. (in spoken language)
- A30 Use conventionalized verbal irony
- A31 Make use of implicature free verbal irony (coming out of conventional implicatures)

Figure 8f: Substrategies within Positive Verbal Irony (found in this study)

<u>B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY</u>	B1 Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance
	B2 Say less than required. Understate
	B3 Make use of conventionalized ironic terms or expressions
	B4 Joke
	B5 Use contradictory speech acts
	B6 Insult the hearer
	B7 Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea
	B8 Other

Figure 8g: Substrategies within Neutral Verbal Irony (found in this study)

<u>C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY</u>	C1 Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your contribution or utterance
	C2 Joke
	C3 Hedge
	C4 Exaggerate, overstate
	C5 Use rhetorical questions
	C6 Use contradictory speech acts
	C7 Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution
	C8 Use implicature-free verbal irony
	C9 Echo someone's utterance, thought or idea
	C10 Use inverted commas, italics, etc. (in written irony)
	C11 Use non-core vocabulary
	C12 Other

8.5 Quantitative analysis of these strategies

In order to have a more accurate idea of the incidence of use of the strategies described in 8.4, an account of the frequency of occurrence of each substrategy was made.

It is important to note that each of the 351 instances of ironic discourse found in the corpora belong to only one of the three main types of verbal irony (namely Negative, Positive or Neutral⁹) but that, as far as the rest of substrategies is concerned, each example may belong to more than one category, i.e., a speaker may, for instance, use the strategies "joke", "exaggerate" and "increase the pitch level of a key word" all at the same time.

I now turn to the tables of frequencies found for the three main types of verbal irony.

8.5.1 Positive, Negative and Neutral irony: frequency of occurrence in the corpora studied

Following are tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5, which give information as to the number of cases found for each of the three main strategies proposed in each of the corpora studied. Table 8.6 displays the total numbers.

⁹ However, in one of the examples, a mixture of both positive and negative irony could be observed, as was noted in 5.3.1. In this case, the type of irony that prevailed was Negative irony, for the utterance was mainly intended as a criticism (in spite of the fact that there was also a positive attitude involved).

Tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5: Frequency and percentage of occurrence of the Positive, Negative and Neutral irony variables in each of the corpora studied

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC (8.1)

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
N ^o of occ. (out of 86)	1	84	1
%	1.16	97.68	1.16

b) GG (8.2)

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
N ^o of occ. (out of 84)	0	83	1
%	0	98.80	1.20

c) YM (8.3)

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
N ^o of occ. (out of 55)	0	50	5
%	0	90.91	9

B) Written corpora

a) BR (8.4)

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
Nº of occ. (out of 46)	0	45	1
%	0	97.83	2.17

b) NA (8.5)

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
Nº of occ. (out of 80)	1	77	2
%	1.25	96.25	2.5

Table 8.6: Total number and percentage of occurrence of the Positive, Negative and Neutral irony strategies in all the corpora studied

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
Nº of occ. (out of 351)	2	339	10
%	0.57	96.58	2.85

Figures 8h and 8.i represent these data in a more graphical way.

Fig. 8h. Frequencies of occurrence of the Positive, Negative & Neutral variables

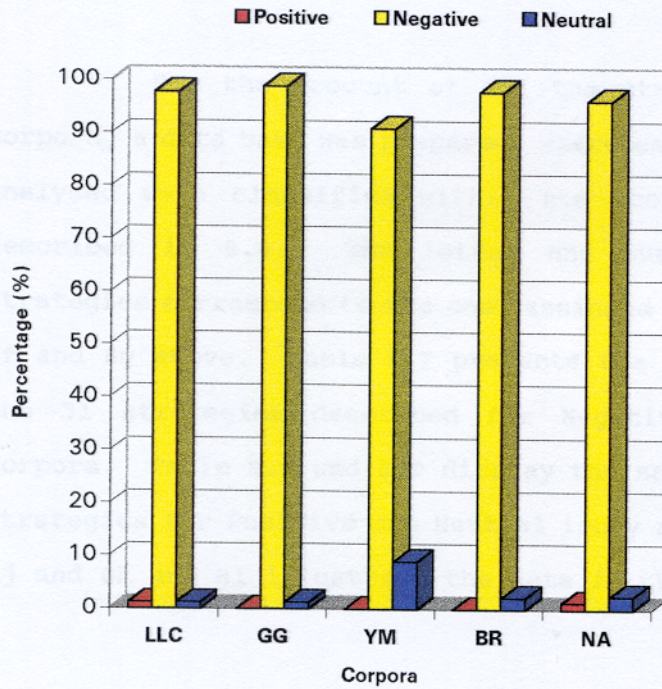
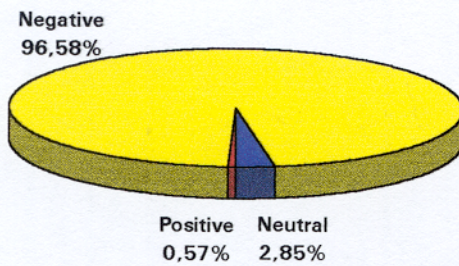


Fig. 8i. Total occurrence of the Positive, Negative & Neutral variables



8.5.2 Substrategies of the three main types: account of their frequency of occurrence

For the account of all the strategies found in the corpora, a data base was prepared, where each of the 351 examples analysed were classified within the scope of the strategies described in 8.4. The letter and number of each of the strategies correspond to the ones assigned to them in Figures 8e, 8f and 8g above. Table 8.7 presents the occurrence of each of the 31 strategies described for Negative Irony in all the corpora. Table 8.8 and 8.9 display the same data regarding the strategies for Positive and Neutral irony respectively. Figures 8j and 8k and 8l illustrate the data in the tables.

Table 8.7. Occurrence of the 31 substrategies found within negative irony in the different corpora studied.

		A: NEGATIVE IRONY STRATEGIES																	
		A ₁	A ₂	A ₃	A ₄	A ₅	A ₆	A ₇	A ₈	A ₉	A ₁₀	A ₁₁	A ₁₂	A ₁₃	A ₁₄	A ₁₅	A ₁₆	A ₁₇	A ₁₈
L L C	N° of. occ. (out of 86)	16	1	0	0	1	4	2	1	1	22	15	12	2	0	3	29	7	8
	Percentage	18,60	1,16	0	0	1,16	4,65	2,33	1,16	1,16	25,58	17,44	13,45	2,33	0	3,49	33,72	8,14	9,30
G G	N° of. occ. (out of 84)	16	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	27	16	15	11	1	1	5	15	0
	Percentage	19,05	0	1,19	0	0	2,33	2,33	0	1,19	32,14	19,05	17,88	13,0	1,19	1,19	5,95	17,86	0
Y M	N° of. occ. (out of 55)	16	0	0	1	4	2	1	0	2	19	19	22	3	2	1	9	2	1
	Percentage	29,09	0	0	1,82	7,27	3,64	1,82	0	3,64	34,55	34,55	40	5,45	3,64	1,82	16,36	3,64	1,82
B R	N° of. occ. (out of 46)	16	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	27	14	2	0	0	10	6	1
	Percentage	34,78	2,17	0	0	4,35	2,17	0	0	0	6,52	57,70	30,43	4,35	0	0	21,74	13,04	2,17
N A	N° of. occ. (out of 80)	20	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	12	46	24	5	0	1	8	8	2
	Percentage	25,00	0	0	0	3,75	0	1,25	0	1,25	15,00	57,50	30,00	6,25	0	1,25	10,00	10,00	2,50
T O T A L	N° of. occ. (out of 351)	84	2	1	1	10	9	6	1	5	83	123	87	23	3	6	61	38	12
	Percentage	23,93	0,57	0,28	0,28	2,85	2,56	1,71	0,28	1,42	23,65	35,04	24,79	6,55	0,85	1,71	17,38	10,82	3,42

Table 8.7. Occurrence of the 31 substrategies found within negative irony in the different corpora studied.

		A: NEGATIVE IRONY STRATEGIES												
		A ₁₉	A ₂₀	A ₂₁	A ₂₂	A ₂₃	A ₂₄	A ₂₅	A ₂₆	A ₂₇	A ₂₈	A ₂₉	A ₃₀	A ₃₁
L L C	Nº of. occ. (out of 86)	1	0	1	0	0	7	5	7	6	0	A L R E A D Y A C C O U N T E D F O R I N C H A P T E R 6	0	22
	Percentage	1,16	0	1,16	0	0	8,14	5,81	8,14	6,98	0		0	25,60
G G	Nº of. occ. (out of 84)	2	2	1	2	0	6	11	6	0	0		13	6
	Percentage	2,33	2,33	1,19	2,33	0	7,14	13,09	7,14	0	0		15,48	7,14
Y M	Nº of. occ. (out of 55)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0		1	14
	Percentage	0	0	0	0	0	1,82	0	7,27	0	0		1,81	25,46
B R	Nº of. occ. (out of 46)	0	0	1	0	0	6	1	0	4	1		2	7
	Percentage	0	0	2,17	0	0	13,04	2,17	0	8,70	2,17		4,5	15,22
N A	Nº of. occ. (out of 80)	1	0	2	0	0	1	7	4	9	13		0	13
	Percentage	1,25	0	2,50	0	0	1,25	8,75	5,00	11,25	16,25		0	16,25
T O T A L	Nº of. occ. (out of 351)	4	2	5	2	0	21	24	21	19	14		16	62
	Percentage	1,14	0,57	1,42	0,57	0	5,98	6,84	5,98	5,41	3,99		4,56	17,66

Table 8.8: Occurrence of the Positive irony substrategies in the corpora analysed

		B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8
LLC	occ.	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
	%	0	1.16	0	1.16	1.16	0	0	0
GG	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YM	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BR	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NA	occ.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	1.25	0	0	0	0	0	0
TO TAL	occ.	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
	%	0	0.57	0	0.28	0.28	0	0	0

Table 8.9: Occurrence of the Neutral Irony substrategies in the corpora studied

		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C 8	C 9	C 10	C11
LLC	occ	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	1.16	1.16	0	0	0	0	0
GG	occ.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	%	1.19	0	0	0	0	0	1.19	0	0	0	0
YM	occ.	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	3	1	0	0
	%	1.82	1.82	3.64	1.82	0	0	3.64	5.45	1.82	0	0
BR	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
	%	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	2.5	2.5	0	2.5	2.5
NA	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	1.25	0	0	1.25
TOTAL	occ.	2	1	2	1	1	2	6	5	1	1	2
	%	0.57	0.28	0.57	0.28	0.28	0.57	1.71	1.42	0.28	0.28	0.57

Fig. 8j. Frequencies of occurrence of the Negative Irony strategies

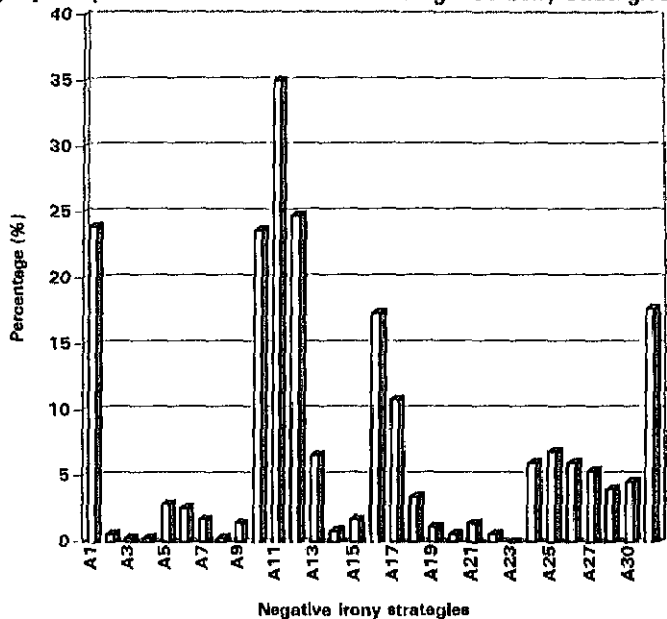


Fig. 8k. Frequencies of occurrence of the Positive Irony strategies

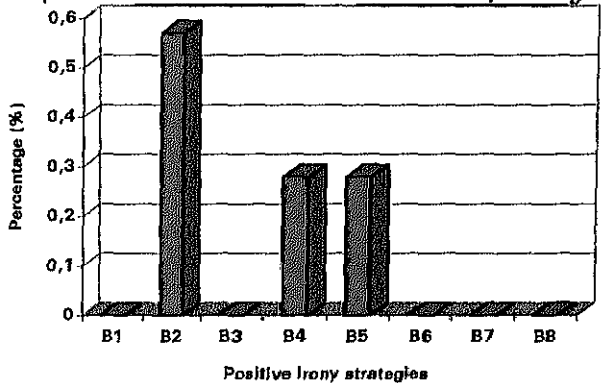
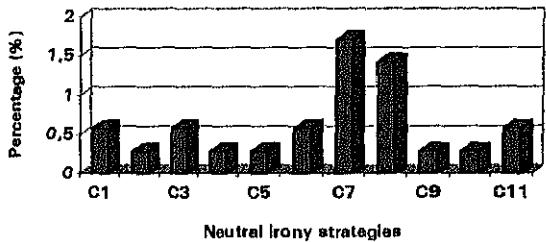


Fig. 8l. Frequencies of occurrence of the Neutral irony strategies



8.5.3 Discussion of the results (Testing Main Hypothesis and Research Hypotheses n° 5 and 12)

The numbers in tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6 leave no possible doubts as to what the most common and most frequently used type of irony is. Negative irony is by far "the winner" in this contest, with 96.58% of the total occurrences. Positive irony is almost non-existent in the corpora studied herein, with only two occurrences out of a total of 351 instances of ironic discourse (which constitutes only 0.57% of occurrences). There are no instances of Positive verbal irony in three of the corpora, namely, GG, YM and BR. Probably this is due to the type of relationship existing between the ironists and their victims (in the television programmes) and to the type of prose in the case of BR. In GG, Dorothy's intellectual superiority and Sophia's age superiority act as weapons that give them power and, therefore, allow them to use negative, aggressive irony against the other two girls rather than praising, positive irony. In addition, it has to be taken into account that this is a television programme, and Negative irony is more likely to elicit the audience's laughter than Positive irony. Something similar happens in YM, between Hacker and Humphrey and Hacker and his wife. In Russell's works, it is also logical to think that Negative irony will be more effective for his purposes, for his intention is always to criticise and denounce those aspects of society that are against his concept of correctness or appropriateness.

In spite of the facts mentioned above, the two

occurrences of positive irony in the other two corpora show its possibility of realisation. Besides, I insist on the fact that some other examples provided by other authors (as those quoted in 8.4.2, 5.3.1 and 4.3.1.2 above) as well as others I recall from my personal experience, also give evidence of its existence as one more type of irony, contrary to what Sperber & Wilson, or Brown & Levinson state (as was discussed in 4.3.1.2 and 5.3.1), and in agreement with the characterization of verbal irony made in this piece of research.

As regards Neutral irony, the quantitative analysis shows that its frequency of occurrence is slightly higher than that of positive irony. Each of the five corpora used has at least one example of neutral irony, something that does not happen with Positive irony since this strategy does not appear in three of the corpora investigated. The total number of occurrences of Neutral irony, out of a total of 351, is 10, which constitutes only 2.85% with respect to the total percentage of occurrence. However, the low percentages found both for Positive and Neutral irony seem to be sufficient data to accept hypothesis n° 5, in which I stated that "not all ironic utterances convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker". As was noted in 4.3.1.2, other examples not found in my corpora but given by respectable authors studying verbal irony have also been decisive for the inclusion of these other two types in this study.

Thus, it has to be acknowledged that, in effect, the most common, frequent and well-known manifestation of verbal irony is its negative one, and probably this is the reason why

some authors have not even thought of the possibility of the existence of the other two types.

Regarding now the occurrence of the different substrategies within each of the three types (shown in tables 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9 and illustrated in Figures 8j, 8k and 8l), the following facts are noticeable:

- The strategies most frequently used by users of Negative verbal irony turned out to be the following, in order of importance:

- 1- A11: Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea (35.04% of occurrences)
- 2- A12: Pretend, simulate (24.79% of occ.)
- 3- A1: Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance (23.13% of occ.)
- 4- A10: Use contradictory speech acts (23.65% of occ.)
- 5- A31: Make use of implicature-free verbal irony (17.66% of occ.)
- 6- A16: Avoid the lower points of a criticism (17.38% of occ.)

The most prominent theories of verbal irony come to light once more in this quantitative analysis. Traditional theories, Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory, and Clark and Gerrig's Pretence Theory or irony are mirrored in the first three most frequent strategies. But even though echoing, pretending and using the proposition contrary to the one intended are frequent practices among ironic speakers, none of these practices covers the totality of occurrences of the phenomenon, not even half of it. Other practices or strategies also seem to be very frequent, namely, using contradictory speech acts, using the conventional implicatures of the words uttered and/or avoiding the lower

points in a criticism by hedging, using neutralised expressions or being ambiguous. Once more, it can be seen that the existing theories point to some prominent feature of verbal irony, but not to all its various possibilities of realisation.

- The other strategies discussed in 8.4.1 show minor percentages of occurrence. Among the most frequent are A17 (Give hints and/or association clues; 10.82%), A13 (Use rhetorical questions; 6.55%), and A24 (Say less than required or expected; 5.98%). One of them, A28 (Make use of inverted commas, bold type, etc.) could obviously only be found in the written corpora, and, therefore, its total number of occurrences ought not to be measured with respect to the total number of examples studied, but to the total number of examples in the two written corpora, which is 126. The 14 occurrences found of this strategy, then, constitute 1.11% of the total, which is a considerable part, but which at the same time tells us that ironic writers have many other tools to make their point. Strategy A29 (Use prosodic features) could, on the contrary, only be measured for the spoken corpora (but see 6.5), but for the reasons already explained in 6.1, only one of the three spoken corpora studied, namely the LLC, was used for the survey of prosodic features, and since a whole chapter (Chapter 6) has been devoted to this issue, no further account of this strategy has been made here.

- Some of the strategies show a marked difference of occurrence from one corpus to the other, as is the case with A30 (Use conventionalised verbal irony) and A18 (Use metaphors). Strategy A30 seems to be one of the favourites in GG (15.16% of

occurrences), whereas its frequency is very low in YM and in BR, and non-existent in LLC and NA. Strategy A18 is quite frequent (9.30%) in LLC, non-existent in GG, and very rarely found in the other three corpora. In the case of A30, and considering that *The Golden Girls* is an American series, it might be hypothesised that American people are more prone to use conventionalised irony than other cultures, in which case this would show the culture-dependency of irony. However, a more profound study with this hypothesis as the main one should be carried out, a study which is not within the objectives of this piece of work.

- As was explained at the beginning of this chapter, more than one strategy can be used by a speaker in the same ironic utterance, and, therefore, the possibilities of combination of all the strategies arise as an interesting point to look into. Considering that the number of substrategies for Negative irony is 31, the statistical possibilities of combination of these strategies are numerous. Of these, 144 combinations were found in the corpora. The data base elaborated for the quantitative analysis of the strategies (see Appendix 2a) permits the observation of such combinations (see Appendix 2b), of which the following appear as the most frequent (from most to least frequent):

- 1- A1 + A11 + A12 (19 occurrences)
- 2- A17 (16 occurrences)
- 3- A1 + A11 (11 occurrences)
- 4- A1 / A16 / A30 (10 occurrences)
- 5- A10 + A13 (9 occurrences)
- 6- A1 + A10 + A11 + A12 (8 occurrences)
- 7- A25 / A31 (7 occurrences)
- 8- A10 / A11 (6 occurrences)
- 9- A11 + A12 / A11 + A28 / A18 (5 occurrences)

Combination n° 1 presents the strategy of using the proposition which is opposite to the one intended, plus that of echoing someone's thought, utterance or idea, together with that of pretending or simulating. This proved to be the most frequent combination, with 19 occurrences (that is, 5.4% of the 351 instances of irony studied presented this combination).

In combination n° 2, the speakers/writers of ironic discourse made use of only one of the strategies, namely "Give hints or association clues". The fact that it appears alone very frequently may indicate that this is one of the most "self-sufficient" strategies to convey irony, since the speaker needs no help from other strategies to make his point. The percentage of occurrence of this combination is 4.56% (16 occurrences out of 351).

Combination 3 groups the use of an opposite proposition to the one conveyed together with echoic irony, with 11 occurrences (3.13% of the total occurrences presented this combination).

Number 4 groups three combinations which turned out to be equal in terms of frequency of occurrence (10 occurrences, i.e., 2.85% of the total). The three of them present only one strategy to do the job, namely "Use the opposite proposition to the one intended", "Avoid the lower points of a criticism" and "Use conventionalised verbal irony". As we already know, the first strategy represents the traditional approach to irony; thus, it seems to be well established as a strategy, and, therefore, it can be used without help from other strategies or

only together with the use of prosodic features in some cases (see Chapter 6). But the occurrence of the other two strategies by themselves is proof of the fact that irony can manifest itself by means of other strategies than the traditional proposition-oriented one.

The fifth combination presents the use of a contradictory speech act with rhetorical questions, which is a logical combination, since a rhetorical question is never intended as a real question. The number of occurrences for this combination is 9, which represents 2.56% of occurrences.

Combination n° 6 groups together the use of the proposition opposite to the one intended, the use of contradictory speech acts, echoic irony and pretence. This shows that, on many occasions, many of the most characterising features of verbal irony are used together. The number of occurrences of this combination in the corpora studied is 8, which represents 2.28% of the total.

Number 7 on the list groups two combinations having the same frequency of occurrence, namely, "Overstate, exaggerate" and "Make use of implicature-free verbal irony". Again, the occurrence of only one of the strategies was sufficient to convey the ironic intended meaning. The number of occurrences of these strategies represent 2% of the total instances of verbal irony analysed.

Number 8 again groups two combinations which happen to have the same frequency of occurrence (1.71%), and which happen to occur by themselves (with no other apparent strategy). I

refer to "Use contradictory speech acts" and "Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea".

Finally, the three combinations under number 9 are grouped together for having the same number of occurrences (5, i.e., 1.42% of total occurrences). They are the following: a) "Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea" and "Pretend, simulate"; b) "Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea" and "Make use of inverted commas, italisation, etc...."; and c) "Use metaphors". The first two combinations reflect two of the most outstanding theories discussed above, but the same cannot be said of the last one (c), which shows (once more) that sometimes irony can be expressed by other types of strategies, without being it necessary to resort to any of the traditional or more "established" ones.

As may be observed, although these combinations proved to be the most frequent, their percentages of occurrence with respect to the total number of instances of irony studied are not very high. This is due to the fact that most of the combinations found only occurred once (and, in a few cases two, three or four times, as shown in Appendix 2b). However, this study of combinations has allowed us to observe certain tendencies of some strategies to combine with other strategies. For instance, the tendency shown by strategy n° 1 (proposition-oriented irony) to combine with strategy n° 11 (echoic irony) is noticeable. A12 (pretence) also seems to be a strategy with a high capacity for combination.

A more detailed analysis of these combinations could

be done, but, for the purposes of this study, it seems sufficient to point to the most frequent combinations and most apparent tendencies in order to be able to appreciate that the strategies discussed and explained in this chapter do not exclude one another.

- As regards Positive irony, it will not be possible to give any definite and final conclusions with respect to the tendencies of speakers to use one strategy or another, given its low percentage of occurrence in the corpora studied herein. The strategy that repeats itself in two different corpora (LLC and the newspaper articles) is B2 (Say less than required, understate), which, as has been shown in different parts of this work, is a strategy very much associated with irony in general. The other two strategies found were B4 and B5 (namely, "Joke" and "Use contradictory speech acts"). It seems logical to find "Joke" as a substrategy very much associated with Positive irony, for, in most cases, a speaker who criticises with a praising intention or who expresses positive feelings by means of apparently negative language, is evidently joking. In one of the two cases found, "Understate", "Joke" and "Use contradictory speech acts" co-occur in the same utterance. The other example is only an instance of understatement; there is no joking or contradiction of speech acts.

- With respect to Neutral irony, the most frequent strategies found were, in first place, C7 ("Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution") and C8 ("Use implicature-free verbal irony") with 1.71% and 1.42% of

occurrences with respect to the total instances of irony analysed. Second in frequency of occurrence are strategies C1 ("Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your contribution"), C3 ("Hedge"), C6 ("Use contradictory speech acts") and C11 ("Use non-core vocabulary"), each one representing 0.57% with respect to the total number of ironic instances analysed. As with Positive irony, the low percentage of occurrence with respect to the total does not allow the researcher to study the tendencies in the combinations of substrategies. In the examples found here, the combinations were C2 + C3 (1 occurrence), C1 + C7 + C8 (2 occurrences), C1 + C7 + C8 + C9 (one occurrence), C6 + C7 + C8 + C10 + C11 (1 occurrence), C7 + C11 (1 occurrence) and C7 + C8 (1 occurrence).

Again, in most instances, the speaker uses more than one strategy, which shows that verbal irony is complex and consists of several bits that form a whole.

In addition to this study of possible combinations, the statistical Chi-square test was carried out in order to find out whether there were significant differences in the frequencies of occurrence of the different strategies with respect to the five different corpora. The results of this test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 12) show that, in effect, the frequencies of occurrence of the different substrategies differ significantly in the case of Negative irony, which implies that the type of discourse influences the choice of one strategy or another. The statistical analysis was not carried out for Positive and Neutral irony, because the number of occurrences of each of the

substrategies in the different corpora is very small (≤ 2), and consequently the results of the test would not be reliable.

8.6 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter, I have attempted to characterise verbal irony as a pragmatic superstrategy that includes several substrategies which may be chosen by the user of the language according to his/her communicative needs. An attempt to define or characterise this phenomenon has also been made, keeping in mind that this is a real risk, considering the versatility and volatility of the phenomenon. As the intention behind the characterisation was to embrace all the instances of verbal irony studied, an important part of this characterisation has been the fact that irony is based on one or more of a group of semantic oppositions which may manifest themselves at different levels, for this has proved to be an invariable feature of irony in the samples of ironic discourse analysed. On the other hand, the substrategies subsequently discussed and quantified have indeed proved to be variable, for none of them can be said to occur in all cases. It seems that the user of the language chooses (consciously or unconsciously) one or another, but that none of them is obligatory. What may be said to be unvariable with respect to the strategies is the fact that the speaker always uses one or some of them. Nevertheless, the quantitative analysis made in this chapter shows that some strategies are more

frequent than others, and, consequently, we may speak about certain tendencies of the users of English to choose some strategies more than others. It can also be said, after the statistical Chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 12), that these tendencies vary with the different types of discourse used, which would imply that some strategies are more appropriate than others for a given type of discourse or genre. Within Negative irony (by far the most frequent kind of irony), the most frequent substrategies coincide with the claims of the most outstanding theories: echoing, pretending and using the proposition opposite to the one intended are the three strategies at the top of the frequency list. However, none of these have proved to be a permanent feature of the overall scope of instances of ironic discourse.

The quantitative analysis of this chapter, as well as the statistical test carried out, have also confirmed the assertions made by some authors (like Haverkate (1988) or Leech (1983) on the less frequent character of Positive irony. The instances of this type have indeed been scarce. Neutral irony has proved to be slightly more frequent than positive irony, but still much less frequent than Negative irony.

The existence of these two less frequent types (Positive and Neutral) nevertheless leads the researcher to accept Hypothesis n° 5 (on the non-derogatory character of some cases of verbal irony), and, therefore, to reject Sperber & Wilson's argument that irony is always derogatory. The whole discussion and argumentation of this chapter also seems to

provide evidence for the acceptance of an important part of the Main Hypothesis, namely, "...its very essence lies in paradox and contradiction (which may be present at different levels); and the pragmatic concept of strategy,.... can help in its explanation and characterisation".

Thus, the main argument put forward in this chapter has been the possibility of characterising irony by means of the pragmatic strategies used by the speakers/writers of English. I also want to argue that verbal irony can be characterised in terms of the discourse functions it fulfils, and this is the main concern of the next chapter.

Chapter 9: THE DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF VERBAL
IRONY: QUALITATIVE AND
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

<<What speakers avoid doing
is as important as what they
do.>>

D. Bolinger, *The Life and
Death of Words*

<<We cannot use language
maturely until we are
spontaneously at home in
irony.>>

Kenneth Burke.

9.1 Introduction

Human language exists to fulfil certain communicative and functional purposes. The context in which language is used and the purposes to which it is put seem to play an important part in shaping language. The effects of the uses to which language is put may vary according to the different types of language employed. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that ironic language may have some particular, specific functions of its own. My intention in this chapter is to analyse once more the pieces of ironic discourse found in the corpora so as to be able to identify these functions and their nature. With this aim in mind, I shall first present a discussion of some of the main scholarly attempts to classify language functions in general. I shall try to establish the connection between ironic language and these general schemes, but I shall also try to show that these schemes are too abstract to

give an accurate description of the functions fulfilled by ironic discourse. Therefore, a more specific classification and explanation of the functions of irony is made, with reference to the particular types of discourse in each of the corpora (since it is a well-known fact that functions have much to do with the genre in question). Thus, the main research question that originated the piece of research in this chapter is the following:

What are the functions of ironic discourse?

from which I derived the final hypothesis, which is based on my intuitions after dealing with so many samples of ironic discourse:

<<Speakers/writers of English use verbal irony in order to fulfil the main functions of *Evaluation*, *Verbal attack* and/or *Amusement*. Other, more specific discourse functions may be fulfilled at the same time, such as *Topic Closure*, *Topic Conclusion*, *Reproach*, *Complaint*, etc..>>

Once more, the qualitative analysis is followed by its quantitative counterpart. It was again considered important to obtain reliable data as to the frequencies of occurrence of the variables studied (which, in this case, are the different functions fulfilled by ironic discourse) in order to estimate the importance or incidence of each of the variables within the phenomenon in question and to test the final hypothesis in this piece of work.

I shall now focus on the above-mentioned attempts to classify the functions of language.

9.2 Approaches to the study of language functions

Levinson (1983) notes that one of the general motivations for the interest in pragmatics is the possibility that significant *functional* explanations can be offered for linguistic facts. One of the most well-known and traditional approaches to these "functions of speech" is Jakobson's (1960). Jakobson associates the functions of speech to the six basic components of the communicational event. Thus, he finds that language performs the following functions: 1) REFERENTIAL (focused on the referential content of the message), 2) EMOTIVE (focused on the speaker's state), 3) CONATIVE (having to do with the speaker's wishes that the addressee do or think such and such, and used in order to achieve some practical effect), 4) METALINGUISTIC (dealing with the code being used), 5) PHATIC (focused on the channel or on the establishment of bonds of personal union between people) and 6) POETIC (concerning the way in which the message is encoded or the artistic and creative use of language in general). As Lyons (1977) notes, all these functions are closely connected, and it is difficult to draw a sharp distinction between one and any of the others. Levinson qualifies this scheme as one "of dubious utility to the pragmaticist in search of functional principles", since "the categories are of vague application, they do not have direct empirical motivation and there are many other rival schemes built upon slightly different lines". He adds:

<<Perhaps the only clear utility is to remind us that, contrary to the preoccupations of many philosophers and a great many semanticists, language is used to convey more than the propositional content of what is said.>>
(1983:42)

In effect, as has been shown through the analysis made in previous chapters and as I intend to continue showing in this last analytical chapter, language, and, in particular, ironic discourse, is used to convey meanings which go beyond the propositional content of what is said.

Halliday (1976, 1978) presents a more abstract scheme consisting of three main functions, namely, EXPERIENTIAL (concerning language as a vehicle to conceptualise and describe our experience), INTERPERSONAL (focusing on the relationships among participants and on the illocutionary acts used by them, i.e., "the speaker or writer doing something to the listener or reader by means of language" (1985: 53)), and TEXTUAL (concerning messages as organized units of information).

In their introductory chapter to *Discourse Analysis*, Brown & Yule point out that the attempts to provide labels for the functions of language "have resulted in vague, and often confusing, terminology" (1983: 1) and, therefore, they only describe two major functions of language : the TRANSACTIONAL function and the INTERACTIONAL function. The former serves in the expression of content and the latter in expressing social relations and personal attitudes. They point to the fact that it is unlikely that, on any occasion, an utterance "would be used to fulfil only one function to the total exclusion of the other" (1983:1), and that is why, further on in the chapter, they speak

of "primarily transactional" or "primarily interactional" language. Thus, in terms of functions, it seems reasonable to speak of *tendencies* rather than of absolute categories that exist to the exclusion of all others.

The foregoing discussion shows that there is scant agreement on what kinds of functions are involved in human language and on which levels they operate. My focus on corpora of natural language forces me to think in terms of observable features of the concrete pieces of discourse studied and of their context. Therefore, I must say that, at every point of the analysis, I tried to make each case fit within any of the above mentioned categories (Jakobson's, Halliday's or Brown & Yule's), but, at the same time, I found out that, at a more concrete level of analysis, there were other -more specific- functions being fulfilled by the speakers or writers of ironic discourse. And even among these more concrete functions, there seemed to be different levels. Thus, for instance, an ironic utterance whose main general function is primarily interactional (in Brown & Yule's terms) may fulfil -at a lower level of abstraction- the function of *verbally attacking* the addressee, and, in turn -and at a lower level of abstraction- it may fulfil the function of *topic closure*. Mc Carthy & Carter (1994) work at what I am here calling "a more concrete level of analysis", and, therefore, some of their categories, such as *topic closure*, *evaluation* and *topic shift*, were useful and enlightening for my particular analysis. Norrick's (1993) study of the functions of conversational joking has also influenced my view of the functions of ironic discourse.

Indeed, since there is a close connection between humour and irony (see chapter 4), it is not difficult to find also a connection between the functions of the former and those of the latter. However, in some cases, neither Norrick's nor Mc Carthy & Carter's categories seemed appropriate, and, consequently, I had to use new labels to describe the observed phenomena.

Since I am working with five different corpora, I shall first refer to the general functions of each of them, taking into account that they display samples of different genres or types of discourse. Furthermore, in one of them (the LLC), the genre is not uniform, and as was specified in chapter 1 and 6, there are samples of face-to-face conversation, telephone conversation, conversation at a law court, etc.. As Mc Carthy & Carter (1994) note, to study the parameter of function involves looking at the relationship between language and contexts of use. I now turn to this issue.

9.3 General abstract functions of the different corpora examined. Some considerations on the influence of genre upon the functions used

9.3.1 LONDON LUND CORPUS

As was specified in chapter 6, of the 64 sub-texts from the LLC that were scrutinized, 35 are private telephone conversations, 19 are face-to-face conversations, 5 are samples of radio discussion, debate, interview or sports comment, 4 are samples of public prepared oration (priests' sermons and mass) and 1 is a piece of legal discourse. All the texts were

considered for the statistical analysis, but a few of them did not present instances of ironic discourse. I refer to the sports comments and the priests' sermons, where there was no apparent use of irony on the part of the speakers. This may perhaps say something about the nature of these two genres, although, in this study, I have not analysed sufficient sermons or sports comments as to make generalisations on the non-use of irony by priests or sports commentators.

Svartvik and Quirk labelled their corpus as a "Corpus of English Conversation", and, thus, only from the title one can infer that the general *interactional* function is the one that predominates in it. Both in the face-to-face and the telephone conversations, there is a marked tendency towards primarily interactional language. Even though, in the majority of cases, the speakers are academics, their intention seems to be the maintenance of social relationships and personal attitudes more than the expression of content. The same is valid for the instances of radio discussion, debate and interview. There are no instances of news reports, which would most probably show a tendency towards primarily transactional language.

Norrick notes that "the frequency and persistence of spontaneous joking in everyday talk suggests that conversation often tends more toward performance and entertainment than to the expeditious exchange of information" (1993: 131). As will be shown in the analysis of the examples, the function of irony in conversation has much to do with joking and amusement, as well as with verbal attack and evaluation, or with all these functions

at the same time.

9.3.2 The Golden Girls and the "Yes, Minister" television episodes

I have grouped these two corpora under the same heading due to the fact that they are both television programmes which have similar aims, and, therefore, the language used in them is likely to fulfil similar functions. Both programmes are comedies, and consequently the irony put in the mouth of the characters is intended to entertain and to amuse the audience. Consequently, it again seems certain that the prevailing general and more abstract function is the *interactional* one.

But in these two corpora, unlike in the other three corpora used in this analysis, a distinction has to be made between: a) the functions of the programmes as wholes, which have to do with the script writers' intentions (here, the authors of the episodes use verbal irony in order to amuse the audience), and b) the functions fulfilled by these instances of irony within the specific situation created in the scene. This has to do with the plot of the episode and the relationship among the different characters. Thus, even when the use of irony may amuse the audience (primary function), a given character may use verbal irony to attack another character or to make a comment on the topic of conversation, for example. In this way, it can be appreciated that there is no single level for functional analysis. Discourse functions may vary for the same utterance, depending on the viewpoint adopted.

9.3.3 Bertrand Russell's works

Even though Russell writes about various social and human problems, his intention is not only to inform us about these problems (transactional function) but also and mainly to denounce certain situations which he considers absurd or unfair to the human race as a whole. He, therefore, tries to influence his readers' opinion by verbally attacking those he considers to be the culprits (Jakobson's conative and phatic functions, respectively). Consequently, and in spite of the fact that there is no physical contact between him and his readers, his prose is intended to fulfil certain interactional or interpersonal functions, as I will try to show by means of the qualitative analysis of the examples of verbal irony found in his writing.

9.3.4 The newspaper articles

The articles which have been analysed are all articles published in British or American newspapers, and whose topics vary. But in spite of the variety of topics, it can be observed that, in all the articles, both the transactional and interactional functions of language are intertwined. The writers want to inform about a given state of affairs, but at the same time they want to poke fun at some victims, or they may want to denounce or verbally attack some people or situation which cannot be thought of as desirable (and this is the reason why they resort to verbal irony in a great number of cases).

These writers sometimes organise their text in such a way that verbal irony may sometimes signal the headline or the beginning, middle and end of a paragraph to obtain certain effects. This organisational function is close to Halliday's textual function.

As has been stated here in a somewhat general way, the discourse functions of ironic language may vary according to the genre or type of discourse where it is being used. Mc Carthy & Carter note that "the idea that there may be underlying recurrent features which are prototypically present in particular groups of texts is an important one ... at the present time" (1994: 24). This idea implies that there is a correlation between language use and specific situations and types of discourse. This I shall try to test by means of the analytical study made in this chapter.

9.4 Analysis of the functions fulfilled by the ironic discourse found in the corpora

At a more concrete level of analysis, when dealing with the 351 instances of irony in the corpora in terms of their discourse functions, it was noted that there were again some functions which could be considered as more general (though less general than those in Brown & Yule's categories (discussed in 9.3 above), for instance), and some others which were more specific. The more general ones are: 1) VERBAL ATTACK, 2) AMUSEMENT and 3) EVALUATION. The more specific ones are greater in number and are

the following:

- 1) TOPIC CLOSURE
- 2) TOPIC CONCLUSION
- 3) TOPIC SHIFT
- 4) TOPIC COMMENT
- 5) TOPIC INTRODUCTION
- 6) RAPPORT BUILDING (Creation of solidarity among the participants of discourse)
- 7) GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK
- 8) PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF
- 9) CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT
- 10) MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST
- 11) MANIFESTATION OF POWER
- 12) TEASING (Poking fun at one's interlocutor)
- 13) COMPLAINT
- 14) REPROACH
- 15) DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE
- 16) INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE
- 17) MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

Each of the more general functions may co-occur, and these may, in turn, co-occur with one or more of the specific ones.

I shall now proceed to present and analyse corpus examples of each of the functions in question.

9.4.1 General functions: VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT AND EVALUATION

9.4.1.1 VERBAL ATTACK

Almost all the examples of Negative irony have as their main function the verbal attack of the speaker's interlocutor or of a third party. When attacking a certain victim, speakers want, at the same time, to distance themselves from these victims or from certain behaviour patterns. This does not happen with Positive or Neutral irony. I shall discuss two examples in which the attacking function is very neatly performed by means of ironic language:

[1] In one of the newspaper articles analysed (published in *The Spectator*), the writer, W. Cash, complains about "the war against child abuse in the United States, which is fast becoming a neurosis". He states that people make crazy accusations no matter whether the accused has committed child abuse or has not, and he tells the reader how a couple were found guilty of abusing their grandchildren on the basis of their granddaughters' confusing testimony, which was later found to have come from a dream one of them had. He subsequently adds:

<<The fact that the child abuse "experts" view a child's testimony as truthful unless proved otherwise is responsible for much of the problem. "Many of the abuse experts in these cases have a preconceived idea of what might have happened and suggest it to the child who then reports it as if it were true", wrote Dr Black and Dr Cort in *The Psychological Bulletin*.>>

(NA, Nov.1, 1993)

As was noted in chapter 8, the use of inverted commas is one of the strategies used by ironists in written discourse, and this

is precisely what W. Cash does here with the word *experts*. He attacks them verbally by taking advantage of the double meaning that the word *experts* may have in this context. They are supposed to be experts in the sense that they can detect and distinguish the cases of child abuse, but, since the author of the article thinks they are not fair people, he uses the inverted commas with two possible intentions: a) to question their expertise in detecting these cases and/or b) to suggest the other possible interpretation, namely, that they are experts because they themselves have committed child abuse. He might therefore be accusing them of the same crime they charge their victims with.

[2] Most of the examples of ironic discourse found in *The Golden Girls* corpus are instances of the function of verbal attack at the level of the interpersonal relations of the four girls (since, as was noted in 9.3.2, from the viewpoint of the intentions of the writers of the episodes, the main function seems to be that of amusement). In the following conversation between Dorothy and her ex-husband (Stan), Dorothy attacks Stan using her sharp sarcasm:

Stan: I can't go home.

Dorothy: Why not?

Stan: Katherine threw me out.

Dorothy: Your wife threw you out? I had no idea she was that bright.

Stan: Katherine accused me of infidelity.

Dorothy: Oh, damn it, Stan. This makes those infidelities during our marriage seem much less special.

(GG, 1991:163)

By apparently praising Stan's present wife ("I had no idea she was that bright"), Dorothy indirectly attacks Stan. The inference is that, if his wife is bright for throwing him out, he must be an undesirable person to live with. Dorothy continues her attack when concluding that "his present infidelities make those infidelities during their marriage seem much less special". She is, at the same time, being reproachful. *Reproach* is one of the more specific functions of verbal irony, which goes hand in hand with the more general one of verbal attack. Dorothy's final ironic remark also fulfils the function of *topic closure*, since she gives a concluding remark, and then they change the topic of conversation. This function will be analysed in detail in 9.4.2.1.

9.4.1.2 AMUSEMENT

It has been observed that, in a great number of cases, the speaker or writer resorts to verbal irony in order to amuse their interlocutor(s) or reader(s). In the following chunk of a radio debate (from the LLC), the speakers are using verbal irony to criticise the poet Robert Burns but also to amuse their audience with their caustic comments:

[1]

h	11	^well of course :Jack's qu/ite r\ight#	/
h	11	but he's ^he's only 'half-'way :th\ere# .	/

h 11 but I ^mean . !the real real reason why [ro @] /
h 11 Burns is :so . [@] :w\orshipped# /
h 11 is ^because of course he was a :self-made m\an# /
h 11 who ^got th/ere# . /
h 11 ^from being a f\arm l/abourer# /
h 11 and was ac^knowledged as a !p\oet# . /
h 11 ^in his own l/ifetime# /
h 11 and ^s\econdly# /
h 11 and ^far :m\ore imp/ortant# /
h 11 he was a ter^rific :l\over# /
h 11 a^mongst these d/our# /
h 11 ^Presbyt/erian :Sc\ots# /
aud 20 (laughter) /
(h 11 ^and he 'had an e"n\ormous n/umber# /
h 11 of ^illegitimate !ch\ildren# - /
h 11 well it's ^two hundred years a:g\o n/ow# /
h 11 and if ^you multiply up those those :illegitimate /
h 11 ch\ildren# /
aud 20 (laughter) /
(h 11 by the ^number of - by the :number of /
(h 11 gener\ations# . /
h 11 that there ^are in :two hundred y/ears# - /
h 11 ^you can :find there're :very very few Sc\otsmen# /
h 11 who ^aren't in f\act# /
h 11 ^worshipping their :own :\ancestor# /
aud 20 (laughter) /
f 11 well ^that was all "v\ery pro_found# /
f 11 ^w\asn't it# /
aud 20 (laughter) /
(f 11 ^Bill M\allalieu# /
m 11 well I ^certainly won't follow Hen:riques on [@] . /
m 11 on th\at one# /
m 11 if ^I start [@] . :naming - :British p\oets# . /
m 11 or ^great . British prominent :p\eople# /
m 11 ^who have got . illegitimate :ch\ildren# /
m 11 ^I shall get the :BBC into [@] . :l\ibel _action# /
aud 20 (laughter) /
f 11 ^not if they're :dead two hundred y\ears# /
aud 20 (laughter) /
m 11 " ^that was :one of the :points that :worries :m\e /
m 11 you _see# /
m 20 [@ @] /
f 11 the ^copyright has exp\ired# /
aud 20 (laughter) /

(LLC, S.5.1)

When f takes his turn in the debate to say that h's comment on Robert Burns's illegitimate children had been very profound, he is being ironic in order to amuse the audience (for h's comment

was not at all profound), and, to judge from the audience's response (laughter) this function was happily fulfilled. The same happens when m states that one of the points that worries him is the fact that "the copyright has expired". They are making fun of Robert Burns but they seem to be highly concerned with attracting their audience's attention by trying to amuse them.

[2] In an article entitled "Anyone for Bazookas" (published in the British newspaper *The Spectator*), Alasdair Palmer describes how he tried to get a bazooka from a gun dealer in Britain. The entire article is written in a humorous tone, and he resorts to verbal irony at some points in order to amuse the reader:

<<Curious to meet the suppliers of this formidable selection of military hardware, I wondered if I could buy a bazooka myself. The dealer was not enthusiastic. "You could try but I wouldn't advise it. The men who organize these sales are not very nice. They wouldn't think twice about running you down if they thought you were setting them up. And, quite honestly, they'd see you coming a mile off. Your problem is that you don't look like you need a bazooka". I was relieved to hear that but I wanted to know what someone who needs a bazooka looks like. The dealer refused to elaborate. "Not like you", was all he would say.

You would be relieved to know that I am not now the proud owner of a bazooka. The price may be coming down but it still costs a couple of thousand pounds and *The Spectator* was not prepared to invest that money on a bazooka -although there are one or two people here who look like they could use one.>>

(NA, January 15, 1994)

The final aftercomment is a humorous and, at the same time, attacking comment. Palmer uses the strategy of overgeneralisation to criticise some of his workmates. He does

not refer directly to them, nor does he directly insult or use epithets to describe them. He only says that they "look like they could use a bazooka" and leaves it up to the reader to infer what they are like. The choice made by Palmer to use irony here has a clearly amusing effect. If he had chosen to criticise his workmates in a direct manner, by way of rude words, perhaps the effect would not have been humorous or amusing.

Let us now direct our attention to the third of the general functions of verbal irony, namely, EVALUATION.

9.4.1.3 EVALUATION

The evaluative function of irony is one of its most relevant functions. Both Positive and Negative irony may be said to fulfil the general function of evaluation. If we are criticising or praising anybody or anything, we are implicitly evaluating such person or thing. In addition, a speaker may use irony to test or evaluate the hearer's knowledge or comprehension of his/her point, something s/he may want to do in order to see whether the hearer belongs to his/her group or whether the hearer agrees with him on a given topic.

The only type of irony which does not seem to fulfil the evaluative function is the Neutral one. In all the cases of neutral irony found in the corpora, the main function is only to *amuse*, without any apparent intention to evaluate. In fact, if the intention were to evaluate, it could no longer be classified as an instance of Neutral verbal irony.

Thus, any of the examples of Negative or Positive irony in the corpora can be used as examples of how the evaluative function is fulfilled. Consider the following ironic remark by B. Russell:

[1]

<<So far as I can remember, there is not one word in the Gospels in praise of intelligence; and in this respect ministers of religion follow Gospel authority more closely than in some others.>> (1958: 82)

Here, Russell is again carrying out one of his biting criticisms of religion. He is indirectly saying that, in his opinion, the ministers of religion are not intelligent and, therefore, the evaluative function of his ironic comment is obvious.

[2] In the following conversation between Dorothy, Blanche, and Sophia, Blanche is telling the other two girls about her experience in the hospital:

Blanche: I was in that grey area between life and death. Uh-uh, the time has come for me to reevaluate my life. For me to take stock of myself. I just know that there's a part of me that nobody's ever seen.

Sophia: I find that hard to believe.

(GG, 1991: 183)

Sophia disrupts the normal turn-taking structure (for only Dorothy and Blanche had previously participated in the conversation) to make one of her usual caustic comments. By saying that she finds it hard to believe that "there's a part of Blanche that nobody's ever seen", she is making use of the pun

or "double entendre" strategy. Sophia rejects here the spiritual interpretation given by Blanche to her comment and resorts to the physical one, implying that, since she always goes to bed with the men she meets, it is impossible for her to have any part of her body that has not been seen by anybody. Thus, it can be stated that Sophia's ironic comment fulfils an evaluative function, and, at the same time, it fulfils the more specific function of "disrupting the prevailing turn-taking structure" (see 9.4.2.15 below).

I now turn to the discussion and exemplification of each of the more specific strategies mentioned in 9.4.

9.4.2 Specific discourse functions of verbal irony

9.4.2.1 TOPIC CLOSURE

Verbal irony is often used to close down the topic of a conversation or the topic of a written piece of discourse. On some occasions, the closure is made by means of an ironic remark that acts as a *coda*, summarizing all the events and evaluating the topic (and here, again, the evaluative function of most cases of verbal irony is clearly seen)¹⁰. In this case, we can also speak of the function of *topic conclusion*. *Topic conclusion* and *topic closure* may coincide or co-occur, but they are not the same thing, as I shall try to explain in 9.4.2.2.

¹⁰ The evaluative and concluding function of codas is discussed by Mc Carthy & Carter (1994: 111), though not for cases of ironic discourse.

The function of topic closure seems to be a rather frequent one for verbal irony (see quantitative analysis in 9.4.3.2). Consider the final part of a conversation between A and B (face-to-face-conversation). In their long conversation, they have been criticising and showing their discontent at the bureaucracy of the faculty. B closes the topic of conversation with a mildly ironic rhetorical question:

[1]

B	11	3((so)) ^th\at's how it _goes# -	/
B	11	3((^[m]#)) - -	/
B	11	3((you ^kn=ow#))	/
B	11	3^this bloody university will be the :d\eath of me#	/
A	11	3(- - laughs) - - ^ph\ew# .	/
B	11	3^y\eah# .	/
B	11	3^oh w/ell# -	/
B	11	3if you ((in"^herit a)) uni'versity from	/
B	11	3b\ureaucrats# .	/
B	11	3^what do you exp\ect#	/
A	20	3(- - laughs)	/
B	11	3^y=es# .	/
B	11	3^oh w=ell#	/
B	11	3[@] ^thank you very m\uch#	/
B	20	3*((1 to 2 sylls* 4 to 5 sylls))	/
A	11	3*((it's a ^pl\easeure#))*	/

(LLC, S.1.2)

The ironic rhetorical question closes the topic of conversation by implying there is not much to be expected from a university in the hands of bureaucrats. It also serves as a conclusion of the topic, showing no hope on the part of B, as well as a critical and evaluative attitude.

[2] Example 2 was presented in chapter 4 when analysing echoic irony. Hacker is tired of Humphrey's tricks, and, so, in this part of the episode, he takes revenge by repeating Humphrey's words: "My lips are sealed", which have been used many times by

him to conceal secrets from Hacker. Now Hacker has a secret and closes down the topic of conversation by using echoic irony:

Humphrey: Where did you get those proposals from?

Hacker: Humphrey, my lips are sealed.

(end of scene)

(YM, 1994 Video Episode, "The Official Visit")

By answering Humphrey's question using one of Humphrey's favourite answers, Hacker is mocking at Humphrey and closing down the topic (the proposals), implying that giving him the information he wants is completely out of the question. The topic is finished, and Hacker will not allow more discussion about it.

[3] Another interesting example of verbal irony used to end up a topic of conversation is found in Sophia's words after listening to Rose's boring monologue:

Rose: I don't like hospitals either. They're full of germs. I always hold my breath in the elevators because there are sick people in the elevators and it's such a small space and once I had to go to the eighth floor of a hospital and the elevator stopped on every floor and I had to hold my breath all the time and I finally fainted and I hit my head and then I had to stay there because I had a concussion and I had to hold my breath all the way down in the elevator to the emergency room. Then I had to hold my breath in X-ray where they ask you to hold your breath anyway and...

(Dorothy enters)

Dorothy: I have great news.

Sophia: Rose, you'll excuse me. We'll get back to your fascinating hospital story later.

(GG, 1991: 55)

Sophia introduces irony as a means to stop Rose's monologue and, consequently, to close the topic of conversation. This is an example of proposition-oriented irony, for it is obvious that Sophia means that Rose's story is not fascinating at all (this example has already been discussed in 2.4.1).

9.4.2.2 TOPIC CONCLUSION

The corpora examples show that sometimes speakers or writers use verbal irony to give a concluding remark about the topic of conversation, but this does not necessarily mean that the topic is being closed. As was noted in 9.4.2.1, the function of topic closure may go along with that of topic conclusion, but this is not always the case, and that is why I have found it necessary to distinguish between the two. Consider the following conversation:

[1]

Dorothy: Look, Ma, I don't know how to say this. So I'll just give it to you straight out. Ken is becoming a clown.

Sophia: (after a beat) Scusi?

Dorothy: Ma, he's tired of being a lawyer so he's joining the circus.

Sophia: What did you do to him?

Dorothy: I didn't do anything.

Sophia: Yeah, right. One day the man's a lawyer, the next he's a clown. Perfectly natural.

Dorothy: Ma, please, this is hard enough as it is.

Sophia: Oh, I'm sorry, sweetheart. I just tend to get a little upset when people ruin my life!

Rose: Sophia, I don't know what all the hullabaloo is about.
Dating a circus clown would be a dream come true for me...

(GG, 1991: 93)

Sophia gives her conclusion of what Dorothy is telling her by using an ironic remark. She says that it is "perfectly natural" for a man to be a lawyer one day and the next a clown, when what she obviously thinks is that it is not natural at all. She gives her conclusion on the topic, but the topic is not closed, for they all keep on talking about the same problem. Thus, topic conclusion here is distinct from topic closure.

In written discourse, topic conclusion and topic closure coincide more often than not, and these functions, in turn, coincide with the end or closing of a paragraph. Consider B. Russell's reflections on St. Thomas's position as regards astrology:

[2]

<<According to St. Thomas, astrology is to be rejected, for the usual reasons. In answer to the question "Is there such a thing as fate? Aquinas replies that we might give the name "fate" to the order impressed by Providence, but it is wiser not to do so, as "fate" is a pagan word. This leads to an argument that prayer is useful although Providence is unchangeable (I have failed to follow this argument), God sometimes works miracles, but no one else can. Magic, however is possible with the help of demons, this is not properly miraculous, and is not by the help of the stars.>>

(BR, 1958: 45)

The conclusion Russell gives on the interpretation of St. Thomas's argument is obviously ironic and intends to mock St. Thomas Aquinas's views on astrology. Russell explains that he has failed to follow St. Thomas's argument when, in fact, what he means is that he thinks such an argument is ridiculous and

contradictory. He goes on using echoic irony as a concluding note to the topic and the paragraph, leaving it open to the readers to draw their own conclusions.

[3] The following is also an example in which the function of topic conclusion coincides with the closure of a paragraph, though not with the closure of the main topic. In this passage of an article published in *The Spectator*, M. Berkman complains about the rudeness of record-shop assistants all over Britain. But he does it using an ironic tone all throughout the article. At one point, he comments:

<<The tradition of the rude record-shop assistant is a long and proud one, and it seems unfortunate to abandon it because of some misplaced desire to make the customer happy. Having gone through the ordeal of buying the record of your choice, you leave the shop exultant at the enormity of your achievement, muttering "Triumph through adversity". These are not trivial pleasures to be thrown away lightly. Still, isolated pockets of rudeness....>>

(NA, Jan. 1, 1994)

The sentence "These are not trivial pleasures to be thrown away lightly" continues with the irony of the whole passage and serves as a conclusion on the topic of the article, but it does not serve as topic closure, for the writer continues talking about it for one more paragraph, until the end of the article.

Another function that has to do with the topic of discourse is *Topic shift*. I now turn to it.

9.4.2.3 TOPIC SHIFT

McCarthy & Carter (1994: 139) write of the "shift of

the topic of conversation" as one of the possible functions of discourse. In the corpora subject to the present analysis, I have found very few instances of the fulfilment of this function.

In the following exchange, Daniel uses verbal irony to close one topic and continues with another ironic remark to apparently change the topic of conversation so as to tell Humphrey in an indirect way that he will have to look for a new job:

[1]

Humphrey: Abolish my department? Out of the question! Simply can't be done.

Daniel: Well, I'm sure you know best Humphrey. Oh, by the way, there's a job center in the Horse Fetty Road, n° 19. Bus stops right outside.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

In a previous part of this conversation, Daniel had been trying to persuade Humphrey to change his mind and do what the Prime Minister expected him to do, but, since Humphrey tells him that is out of the question, Daniel closes the topic of conversation by means of the ironic utterance "Well, I'm sure you know best Humphrey". Needless to say, Daniel does not think Humphrey knows best; on the contrary, he thinks he will lose his job because of this, and that is why he changes the topic with another ironic comment which is related to the previous topic. He elegantly gives Humphrey the address of a job center, to insinuate that he will be dismissed from his job.

[2] Topic shift is marked in one of the newspaper articles (published in *The Sunday Times*) by an ironic secondary title. The main headline of the article is *British love of animals goes too far*. Its author starts the article complaining about the great power that The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has in Britain. In an ironic tone, he criticises British society in general for being more fond of animals than of human beings. When he finishes this general introduction, he marks his shift from a general to a more specific topic with the following ironic title: *Sentenced for killing a rat*, after which he tells the true story of a woman who was sentenced for going on a trip and leaving her rat alone at home to die of hunger. The writer is mocking, and at the same time, criticising such an attitude. The title is ironic in that it seems absurd to a sound mind to hear that anyone has been taken to court and sentenced for killing a rat, and has the power to denounce these people, who, in the author's view, have taken their love of animals to an extreme and dangerous position.

9.4.2.4 TOPIC COMMENT

On some occasions, a speaker/writer may use verbal irony to make a comment on the topic of the ongoing conversation or discourse. This comment is generally around the middle of the conversation, with no intention on the part of the speaker to close down, shift or introduce the topic. Such is the case of Daniel's comment in the following dialogue:

[1]

Daniel: ... The Home Office and the Civil Service Department have all proposed to abolish your Department of Administrative Affairs, and the P.M. is smiling on the plan.

Humphrey: Absurd!

Daniel: Clean, dramatic, very popular politically, no real inconvenience. Let's face it; all your functions could be subsumed by all the departments. Jim Hacker will thoroughly win through by the public spirit of self-sacrificing policy. The P.M. will probably be kicking him upstairs...

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

When Daniel says "clean, dramatic, very popular politically, no real inconvenience", he refers to Hacker's policy of self-sacrifice and open government, and, needless to say, he does not believe this policy is good and with no real inconvenience. Nor does he think that "Hacker will win through thoroughly by the public spirit of self-sacrificing". He is completely against this policy and expresses his disapproval by means of an ironic comment on it.

[2] Consider the following passage in which B. Russell makes a comment which is a clear instance of echoic irony:

<<When Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning-rod, the clergy, both in England and America, with enthusiastic support of George III, condemned it as an impious attempt to defeat the will of God. For, as all right-thinking people were aware, lightning is sent by God to punish impiety or some other grave sin - the virtuous are never struck by lightning. Therefore, if God wants to strike anyone, Benjamin Franklin ought not to defeat His design; indeed to do so is helping criminals to escape.>>

(BR, 1958: 135)

In this passage Russell is echoing the thoughts and ideas of the

clergy to ridicule them and to show that his opinion is contrary to theirs. Needless to say, Russell does not think that "lightning is sent by God to punish impiety or some other grave sin", or that the people who believe that are "right-thinking" people. These ironic remarks function as a comment on the topic which, in turn, functions as a verbal attack on the clergy (Negative irony). The function of topic conclusion is also present here in the last ironic sentence, when Russell says that Franklin's invention could help criminals to escape. The absurdity of such a conclusion also serves the function of verbal attack, for it makes it obvious to the reader that Russell is once more engaged in making one of his caustic criticisms.

Let us now consider some examples of the *Topic Introduction* function of verbal irony.

9.4.2.5 TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Verbal irony can not only be used to close down, comment on, or give a conclusion on a topic. It can also be used to introduce a topic of discourse. It seems that this is a relatively frequent function for ironic discourse within journalistic writing: ironic headlines may serve as introducers of the main topic of the article in question. Mc Carthy & Carter note that "the newspaper headline, with its special grammar and lexis, signals the opening of a particular genre" (1994: 64). Indeed, in all the examples analysed herein, it can be said that

the headline not only introduces the topic but also the type of discourse that is going to be used: when the writer uses verbal irony as a strategy for the headline, he will most likely continue with the same ironic tone all throughout the article. Therefore, perhaps it could be stated that ironic discourse sometimes constitutes a genre in itself. However, as we shall see, ironic discourse is used to fulfill several functions, and these functions can subclassify ironic discourse into other genres such as "humorous discourse", "protest", "Complaint", "Gossip", etc.

Consider the following examples:

[1] In an article published in *The Sunday Times*, whose title is "A real fake", Geordie Greig writes about the curious case of Mark Kostabi, "the rich New York artist who is famous for not painting his own paintings". Kostabi, Greig explains, has made a fortune without touching a paint brush. He has a team of assistants that paint all his pictures for him, and all he does is add his signature and then sells the pictures as original Kostabis for up to 50.000 dollars. The irony of the title lies precisely in the fact that his fake is real, for his pictures are valued as originals even though he does not paint them. The author of the article wants, therefore, to criticise Kostabi for doing so. Furthermore, Greig tells his readers that Kostabi accused one of his assistants of selling "fake Kostabis", which presents a further ironic situation. The title of the article, then, is an ironic piece of discourse that fulfills the function of introducing the topic of information and discussion. (NA, Nov.

15, 1993).

[2] The title of an article published in the *American Time* (NA, Jan. 15, 1994) is "All you need is hate". This title reminds the reader of the famous song by The Beatles called "All you need is love". The article is about the groups of Nazis and Neo-Nazis who represent the lunatic fringe of the American talk show spectrum. The author of the article, R. Zoglin, uses irony to criticise and attack these people and their arguments. The title ironically points to the fact that Nazis are full of hatred, and this is not precisely what one would expect from "civilised" people in "civilised" countries. The criticism is also made against the television channels, which broadcast these "hate shows" with Nazis as their stars, and against the fact that these channels are not censored except for obscenity.

Verbal irony can also be used to introduce a topic of conversation, as the following telephone conversation between Hacker and Humphrey illustrates:

[3] (Hacker is phoning Humphrey at two o' clock in the morning. He is doing this out of revenge to show Humphrey that he has read the papers Humphrey did not want him to read)

(telephone rings)

Humphrey: (in bed and quite asleep) Hello.

Hacker: Humphrey, sorry to ring you so late. Didn't I interrupt in the middle of dinner or anything today?

Humphrey: Oh, no. I finished dinner some while ago. What's the time?

Hacker: Two a.m.

Humphrey: Good Lord! What's the crisis?

Hacker: Oh, no, no crisis. I'm just going through my boxes and I knew you would still be hard at it...

Humphrey: Yes, er... yes, yes. Nose to the grindstone.

Hacker: Well, I've just come accross this data base paper...

Humphrey: Fine, you've er... read it? (surprised)

Hacker: I've got to tell you straight away I'm not happy with it. I knew you'd welcome an opportunity to work on Sunday. Right. Hope you don't mind my calling you.

Humphrey: Not at all master, always a pleasure to hear from you.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Big Brother")

Hacker uses an ironic tone all throughout the conversation, and the audience can see how he rejoices in waking Humphrey up at 2 o' clock in the morning. He is not sincere, thus, when he says that "he is sorry to ring so late", or when asking "Didn't I interrupt in the middle of dinner or anything today?". Hacker starts, continues and finishes the telephone conversation by using verbal irony, and introduces the topic he wants to talk about by means of another ironic remark, namely, "I was just looking through my boxes, and I knew you would still be hard at it...". Needless to say, Hacker knows perfectly well that Humphrey was not hard at it but in the middle of a sound sleep. He wants to show Humphrey that he is no fool and will not allow him to cheat him. He has read the data Humphrey had concealed from him and will now act against Humphrey's wishes.

There are other functions that can be fulfilled by verbal irony in discourse that do not concern the topic of conversation. I turn to them now.

9.4.2.6 RAPPORT BUILDING/ CREATION OF SOLIDARITY AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS OF DISCOURSE

At different points of this thesis, I have pointed out the potential capacity for building rapport or creating solidarity that a user of verbal irony may have. This function of irony is evident in the instances of Positive irony, where a negative criticism is made in order to convey its positive counterpart or show that both speaker and addressee/s belong to the same social group (as is the case with the ritual insults of black adolescents in New York, as described by Labov (1972)). But this function is, in fact, also fulfilled by many instances of Negative irony, when speakers try to produce animosity by covert aggression against a third person not present in the conversation, and, at the same time, they want to test for group membership. If the interlocutor/s support(s) the speaker in the criticism, then solidarity is created among them. They now know that they belong in the same group of people, who disapprove of the behaviour of those being criticised (the victims). Such is the case of the two academics in the following example, who are both against the bureaucratic structure of the Faculty, and therefore they use some ironic metaphors all through the conversation, which are meant to ridicule and criticise such structure. These metaphors establish associations and comparisons (another of the ironic strategies) between the bureaucratic structure of the government and that of the Faculty:

[1]

(A 11 3^but . [dhi] . !faculty of \arts# . /
A 11 3^has . [e:] a sort of - su!preme s\oviet# . /
A 21 3*.* . which is /
B 11 3^[/mhm]## /
(A 11 3called the "b\oard of the _faculty# /
B 11 3^y\es# /
A 21 3^and /
B 11 3^you're on th\at# /
A 11 3"^n/\o _no _no# . /
A 11 3^D\ave is# . /
B 11 3"^D\ave is _on _that# . /
B 11 3^ah# /
A 13 3and ^that's [dhi] ^that's [dhi] *((. ^wh\at do you/ /
A 13 3[m] 'call it#))* /
B 11 3*^that's the "g\auleiters## /
B 11 3^y\es# /
A 11 3^well " !that's [dhi dhi: dhi: e] . " !s\yllabus /
A 11 3_gauleiters# /
B 11 3^[/mhm]# - /
B 11 3and ^what are !y\ou _then# /
A 11 3^I'm on the :academic :c\ouncil# /
B 11 3^ah# /
B 11 3*((^v\ery nice po_sition#))* /
A 11 3*((to ^wh=om#))* /
A 11 3[dhi] ^board of the faculty re"!p\ort# - - /
B 11 3((^g=ood#)) /
A 24 3[e:m] . ((^but)) . ^I'm on ^I'm ^I'm on [dhi:] /
B 11 3((you ^ought to have)) a bloody great *!chart up /
B 11 3th/ere## /
B 11 3you ^kn\ow# /
B 21 3you ((1 syll)) ^sort of - [e:] /
A 20 3*(- laughs)* /
(B 11 3!vice-ch\ancellor# /
B 11 3^pr\incipal# /
B 21 3*(- laughs)* . (("^two)) /
A 20 3*(- laughs)* /
(B 11 3((of your . *!b\oxes#))* /
A 11 3*it would be* it would be ^very /\easy . *in /
A 11 3_fact## /
A 21 3[e:m] - you ^get (starts writing on board) - [e:m] - /
A 21 3e:] /
B 20 3*(- - - laughs)* /
(A 11 3- - :c\ourt# - - /
A 11 3*s/enate## - /
A 11 3[e:m] - - ^acad\emic c\ouncil# /
B 11 3*s/enate## /
(A 11 3- [e:] ^extram\ural c\ouncil# *- * /
A 21 3col^l\egiate /
B 11 3*((^y/eah#))* /
(A 11 3_council# /
A 21 3(stops writing) *- * ^now the :extram\ural /

B 11 3*^h\ah#*
 (A 11 3c/ouncil#
 A 11 3^\obviously# .
 A 11 3*.* the col^l\egiate c/ouncil#
 B 11 3*^[\m]#*
 (A 11 3^\obviously#
 A 11 3^that's dealing with this sort of !structure of
 A 11 3*":c\olleges#*
 A 21 3[n] **and** and
 B 11 3*((^[\m]#))*
 B 11 3**y\es#**
 (A 11 3ap^pointment of *pro:f\essors* (and ^th\ings#)#
 B 11 3*y\es#*
 (A 20 3. *((and))* the
 B 11 3*the "acad\emic* c/ouncil#

(LLC, S.1.2)

The metaphors "supreme soviet", "vice-chancellor principal", "court" and "senate" are used to produce a joking atmosphere that identifies the two participants as members of the same "party": both of them mock the bureaucracy of the Faculty and are against it.

The next example within this function is one in which it is clear that the writer wants to create solidarity. This is an example of Positive irony that has been discussed previously with respect to other variables distinct from function. I refer to an article published in *The Sunday Times* where its author, Ian Chadband, uses Positive irony in order to create solidarity in favour of Conchita Martínez, the famous Spanish tennis player:

[2]

<<The young autograph hunters were quick to approach the glamorous figure of Gigi Fernández during the Brighton tournament last October. Not one, however, thought it worth asking for the signature of her companion. Perhaps somebody should have told them that the Wimbledon champion, Conchita Martínez, can play a bit too.>>

(NA, Jan. 1, 1995)

Needless to say, the writer thinks that -being the Wimbledon

champion- Conchita Martínez can play much more than "a bit" and he then uses Positive verbal irony to show solidarity towards this tennis player, to express his admiration for her, in spite of the fact that she was not recognised by people.

The building of rapport or solidarity among the participants of an interaction may create an atmosphere in which all the participants are encouraged to generate and use further ironic-humorous talk. I shall refer to this in the next section.

9.4.2.7 GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK (creating a particular form of talk for the ongoing interaction)

Example [1] in the previous section (9.4.2.6) is also an instance of this function. A starts criticising the bureaucratic structure of the Faculty by using a humorous metaphor, and this favours and generates the use of further ironic language on the part of both A and B.

Another similar instance can be seen in this face-to-face radio discussion, where h starts criticising a rock singer in an indirect way, and this paves the way for further ironic criticisms by other participants in the discussion:

[2]

h	11	the ^second f\eature# -	/
h	11	which ^I think is depl\orable#	/
h	11	is the ^kind of :savage :way we :feel about this	/
h	11	:wretched m\an# -	/
h	11	his ^mother de:scribes him as a , :chap who's been	/
h	11	neur:otic ever since he was a :child of tw/o# .	/
h	11	he ^suddenly finds that he's :got this	/
h	11	extra:ordinary . :incapacity of being :able to	/
h	11	:sing in a :normal v\oice#	/
h	11	((but)) ^making this awful sort of :high fal:setto	/
h	11	th\ing#	/

h 11 with ^full echo \on# - /
 h 11 which ^sends :teenagers cr/azy# - /
 h 11 he ^suddenly f\inds# /
 h 11 in^stead of earning :five or six quid a w/EEK# . /
 h 11 in a ^f/actory# . /

.....

h 11 and and the ^third deplorable thing ab/out it# /
 h 11 is my ^own !feelings about th\is# - /
 h 11 there's ^something that makes us feel s\avage# /
 h 11 a^bout these rock and roll s\ingers# . /
 h 11 and ^I hate it :in mys/elf# /

.....

h 11 I ^st\ill# . /
 h 11 "hate . the :s\ound he m/akes# . /
 h 11 when he ^sings down that thing with the :echo /
 h 11 turned /on# . /
 h 11 ((and)) ^stereophonic and all the r/est# - /
 h 11 but ^what I hate [s] . :still m/ore# . /
 h 11 is I ^hate the feelings in mys/elf# . /
 h 11 and there's ^something very !f\unny about this /
 h 11 'rock and roll b/usiness# - /
 h 11 and this ^teenage squealing ab/out it# . /
 h 11 that ^raises these savage feelings in our ordinary /
 h 11 . :decent br\east# /
 f 11 (laughs) ^Ted L\eather# /
 tl 11 well I ^guess my :ordinary :decent :br\east# /
 tl 11 is a ^little :different than R\obert's# /
 ? 11 I ^bet it \is# /
 aud 20 (laughter) /
 f 11 ^fair en/ough# /
 tl 11 ^n\o# /
 tl 12 ^I I [e] - I [th] . I ^I won't have :rock and roll /
 tl 12 att\acked# /
 tl 11 ^I think a :healthy . ex!uberant ex:pression of /
 tl 11 :energy and :noise for :young people's a /
 tl 11 :thoroughly good th\ing# - /

(LLC, S.5.1)

The first radio speaker (h) refers ironically to the singer's "extraordinary incapacity of being able to sing in a normal voice", which is a funny way of saying that he was a bad singer. This sets out the ironic-humorous atmosphere which generates further ironic comments on the part of Ted Leather (tl), who suggests that his "ordinary decent breast is a little (notice the

ironic hedge) different than Robert's" and who, further on in the conversation, defines rock and roll in an ironical manner by saying that it is "a healthy exuberant expression of energy and noise" (i.e., he defines it as "noise" or as anything but music). All this gives a humorous tone to the whole radio programme and provokes laughter from the audience. h chose irony as a strategy to talk about rock and roll singers, and this created a particular form of talk for the ongoing interaction. The other participant and the audience accepted the rules and followed h in his game.

Sometimes a speaker does not use irony and humour to criticise a third party, but to present a sense of humour about him/herself. This is the function discussed in the next section.

9.4.2.8 PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

Norrick (1993) writes about this function of language as one that can be used for its positive payoffs:

<<Self-mocking may show we do not take ourselves too seriously, it may fend off mocking by others, and even prompt positive face work by them>> (1993: 80)

Needles to say, a common strategy for self-mocking is the use of verbal irony. In the following dialogue between two male academics, B makes fun of himself by using the ironic strategy of asking a rhetorical question:

[1]

B	11	2^I I I I I !b\ought _one#	/
B	11	2((sylls)) ^or was :g\iven one#	/
B	11	2I ^can't re:m\ember#	/

B 11 2for a ^b\irthday _present# - /
 B 11 2*- * ((3 sylls)) I ^h\ave one th/ough# - /
 B 11 2+--+ and I ^have !large _numbers of !sl\ides# /
 a 20 2*I see* +good+ /
 (B 11 2- in^cluding slides of my w\edding# - /
 B 11 2^which I :t\ook# /
 B 11 2because I re^fused to be !\in them# /
 a 20 2(laugh) wise . /
 B 11 2^v\ery _wise# . /
 B 11 2^I th/ought# - /
 B 11 2^why !r\uin the _thing# - /

(LLC, S.2.1)

B presents a sense of humour about himself by implying that if he had been in his wedding slides, he would have "ruined the thing" (perhaps insinuating that he is too ugly to be in any photograph), which is also a funny comment to make, since it is very strange for a bridegroom not to appear in his wedding photographs, no matter how ugly he may be.

As the quantitative analysis will show, this function did not prove to be one of the most frequent in the corpora studied.

9.4.2.9 CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

It has been observed that one of the functions that an ironic remark may fulfil is to clarify or illustrate a point the speaker/writer wants to make. This is the case of the following excerpt from an article published in *The Spectator*, in which Alasdair Palmer uses irony to criticise the "Animal Liberation Front":

[1]

<<On 16 September last year, two weeks after the IRA announced a "permanent ceasefire", five bombs went off

in Harrogate and York. The bombs had been planted by a splinter group of the Animal Liberation Front, the Animal Rights Militia.

A charity shop for the Imperial Cancer Research Fund was one of the targets. The Fund's crime was that in trying to look for a cure for cancer, some of its scientists conducted experiments on animals. No one was killed in the bombing, but that was more by accident than by design.>>

(NA, March 15, 1995)

The tone of the article shows clearly to the reader that the writer of this article is completely against these animal bigots. In the excerpt above, Palmer uses the word "crime" ironically, for it is evident that he does not believe that to conduct experiments on animals to look for a cure for cancer is a crime. He uses irony to clarify the information given in the first paragraph, to show his readers how ridiculous and absurd the Animal Rights Militia's procedures are, since what should be considered a crime is the bombing and not the search for a cure for cancer.

[2] In the following passage, Russell ironically illustrates with examples the conditions necessary for the old morality to be re-established:

<<If the old morality is to be re-established, certain things are essential; some of them are already done, but experience shows that these alone are not effective. The first essential is that the education of girls should be such as to make them stupid and superstitious and ignorant; this requisite is already fulfilled in schools over which the churches have any control. The next requisite is a very severe censorship upon all books giving information on sex subjects; this condition also is coming to be fulfilled in England and in America, since the censorship, without change in the law, is being tightened up by the

increasing zeal of the police. These conditions, however, since they exist already, are clearly insufficient. The only thing that will suffice is to remove from young women all opportunity of being alone with men: girls must be forbidden to earn their living by work outside the home, they must never be allowed an outing unless accompanied by their mother or an aunt; the regrettable practice of going to dances without a chaperon must be sternly stamped out...

These measures, if carried out vigorously for a hundred years or more, may perhaps do something to stem the rising tide of immorality.>>

(BR, 1958: 65-6)

In this passage Russell uses the strategy of *pretending* to be one of the people in favour of "the old morality", but, needless to say, his readers will readily understand that he is completely against these people and their ideas. One of the clues to understand this is precisely the clarification and illustration of the point he is apparently making: when he writes that "education of girls should be such as to make them stupid or superstitious" or that "women should be forbidden to earn their living by work outside the home", etc., he is giving examples of some of the measures he thinks that the old moralists would take, but he is, of course, being sarcastic by presenting extreme examples which are obviously taken as ridiculous by the reader. Therefore, it is clear that Russell is using sarcastic irony to illustrate his point, with the ultimate aim of attacking the old moralists in question.

9.4.2.10 MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

On some occasions, a speaker or writer may resort to

irony in order to express his/her scepticism or disbelief of a person or situation. Indeed, it has been shown and discussed in chapter 8 how the underlying opposition of some ironies is precisely the *Belief/Disbelief* one¹¹. An example of irony that fulfils this function can be observed in Dorothy's rhetorical question in the following dialogue (which was also analysed in chapter 5):

[1]

Blanche: I've decided I can handle this relationship. I'm going out with Dirk Saturday night.

Dorothy: Was it ever in doubt?

Blanche: Momentarily. This is strictly off the record, but Dirk is nearly five years younger than I am.

Dorothy: In what, Blanche, dog years?

(GG, 1991: 65)

Dorothy uses the ironic strategy of a rhetorical question to show that she does not believe that Dirk is only five years younger than Blanche. Dorothy wants Blanche to be more realistic and uses irony to tell her that she can not fool her and that she (Blanche) should not fool herself: a relationship with so young a man is not likely to last long or end happily.

[2] Consider now Humphrey's last remark in the following exchange:

Bernard: What are we supposed to do about it?

Humphrey: Can you keep a secret?

¹¹ The typical strategy fulfilling this function is the conventionalized strategy "Reply to a lie with an even bigger lie to show that you are not being cheated", discussed in this study in 8.4 -A30- (chapter 8).

Bernard: Of course.

Humphrey: So can I.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Humphrey uses verbal irony to show he does not trust Bernard. This example was previously analysed as one in which the underlying opposition is the *Expected/Unexpected* one: by giving an unexpected answer (i.e., by saying he can also keep a secret instead of telling Bernard the secret) Humphrey is indirectly telling Bernard that he does not trust him as a confidant to whom he can tell his secrets. Irony is a strategy that serves the function of showing disbelief or distrust in an "elegant" fashion: it is softer and more elegant to use this strategy than to tell a person directly that one does not believe what s/he is saying or that one does not trust him/her.

9.4.2.11 MANIFESTATION OF POWER

In chapter 5, I tried to analyse the intricate relationship between power and irony, and it was noted that, on many occasions, the people in power resort to irony because they feel entitled to do so, precisely on account of their power. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that there may be occasions on which a person uses irony to show his/her interlocutor/s that s/he is a person that holds some kind of power. This seems to be the case in the following conversation, in which two male academics (professors A and B) are interviewing a female undergraduate as a pre-requisite to start her graduate

studies:

[1]

a 20 2[0] is there any connection between all these /
a 20 2people were they writing in different centuries - ./
a 20 2people you have mentioned so far - - /
A 11 2[@:m] . ^w\ell# - - /
A 11 2^M\arlowe was# - /
A 12 2a ^little . [0:] a ^little /after 'Shakespeare# . /
A 11 2I ^th/ink# /
a 20 2you haven't got very much sense of perspective you /
a 20 2know and this is going to hold you up terribly in /
a 20 2your English work things that we expect to be able /
a 20 2to take for granted . /
A 11 2*^[\m]## /
a 20 2*when* we're talking about periods aren't going to /
a 20 2mean anything to you all of these people that we've /
a 20 2talked about wrote between fifteen fifty and /
a 20 2sixteen fifty - it was the reign of Elizabeth - you /
a 20 2see and this this means something in the history of /
a 20 2English literature . /
A 11 2^[\mhm]# /
a 20 2now we can't set up lecture courses and talk about /
a 20 2simple history or indeed even the simple history of /
a 20 2English literature we will compare a a play written /
a 20 2in the Restoration Period [0m] with something that /
a 20 2happened in Elizabethan times and we assume that /
a 20 2our students are knowing what we are talking about /
a 20 2you *see* /
B 11 2*and* we ^\also ass/ume# /
B 11 2that they ^kn\ow that# /
B 11 2^M\arlowe# /
B 11 2was ^writing be'fore !Sh\akespeare# - /
B 11 2not *^after** /
a 20 2*before* you see very impor**tant** /
B 11 2**^y\es*** /
A 11 2^w\ell# . /
A 11 2I ^know it's a . !dr\awback# /
A 11 2^but in 'fact I !h\aven't 'been# - /
A 11 2^r\eadin m/uch# . /
A 11 2^or at!tending any !cl\asses or 'anything /
A 11 2'since# . /
A 11 2^A-!l\evel# /
A 11 2and I'm ^twenty-!tw\o 'now# /
A 11 2but - - I'd ^have a " !few 'months be'fore /
A 11 2Oc:t\ober# /
A 11 2and - - - ^w\ell# /
A 11 2I'd be de^voting 'my full t\ime to 'doing /
A 11 2/English# /
A 11 2in^stead of !to - . !doing a !j\ob# /
A 20 2*((syll))* /
B 11 2*you mean* ^after your :L\atin is 'finished# /

a	20	2after your Latin is finished .	/
A	11	2^y\es# .	/
A	11	2well ^that's - ((the)) !whole of . Ju'ly 'August	/
A	11	2Sept/ember# -	/
A	11	2^one can at !least 'read a . :history of 'English	/
A	11	2:L\iterature#	/
B	11	2^[\m]#	/
a	20	2(laughs .) *yes*	/

(LLC, S.3.1)

At some points of this conversation, the professors use the ironic strategy of "being vague" or "overgeneralising" in order to show their academic power. When A says that the reign of Elizabeth means "something" in the history of English Literature (implying the student had no idea about it), or when he says that they "assume that their students are knowing what they (the teachers) are talking about" (implying she had given proof of not knowing what they were talking about), or when he finally concludes: "one can at least read a history of English literature" (implying she has not read such a history), he is trying to show the power he has over her, namely, the power of not accepting her as a graduate student.

9.4.2.12 TEASING/ POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR

We have already seen that "joking" is one of the strategies used by ironic speakers (see 8.4). In some of the cases in which the ironic speaker is joking, s/he may be doing it with the intention of teasing or poking fun at his/her interlocutor/s. This appears to be the case of Mick's ironic remark in this exchange:

[1]

Mick: How long have you been a Minister?

Hacker: A week and a half.

Mick: I think you may find a place in the Guinness for the records.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Before this conversation, the audience knows that the Prime Minister is not very pleased with Hacker's new policy of open government, and that is why Mick's remark is understood as ironic: he is insinuating that the Prime Minister will fire Hacker, and that is why he will find a place in the Guinness records: he will be remembered as the Minister who governed for the shortest period of time in history. Mick's utterance, thus, fulfils the function of teasing Hacker. Mick wants to poke fun at Hacker by making him think of the worst possible consequence of his "open government" policy: his dismissal as a Minister of Administrative Affairs.

Following is another instance of verbal irony functioning as a means for teasing an interlocutor: Sophia makes an ironic joke in order to tease her daughter Dorothy:

[2]

Dorothy: Hi, girls. Do these pearls look okay with this?

Blanche: Honey, pearls look fine with everything from the fanciest dress to... that. You have another date with Ken. Oh, Sophia, do you believe it?

Sophia: And I thought my head was spinning from the splash of vino in my lemonade.

Rose: Sophia, you don't put wine in your lemonade.

Sophia: No, you're right. I don't. It was a joke. Ha-Ha.

(GG, 1991: 87)

Sophia uses irony when she says that "she thought her head was spinning from the splash of vino in her lemonade" to tease Dorothy by showing disbelief in the fact that Dorothy had another date with Ken (a man who, according to the girls, is "gorgeous", as well as having money and class). Both "showing disbelief" and "teasing" are functions being fulfilled by Sophia's ironic utterance in this particular context.

Teasing is connected to humour, and, therefore, it is not surprising that it should be also connected to verbal irony.

9.4.2.13 COMPLAINT

Since irony is a weapon which is very frequently used to attack and criticise, it is also used on many occasions to complain about a given state of affairs. Sometimes we criticise because we want to complain and express our discontent with somebody or something. Examples of this function have been found more frequently in the corpus containing newspaper articles. Indeed, complaining appears to be an important function accomplished by journalistic discourse in general, be it by means of verbal irony or by any other means. Journalists are expected to denounce any undesirable event or state of affairs to make it public to the people and fight against it.

Consider the following excerpt, taken from an article

published in the *American Time*, in which the writer, Jim Smolowe, uses irony to complain about the gangsters "who traffic in human contraband":

<<The hiss of the snakehead is soft and seductive to the ear of the young Chinese who dream of a better life. You can have anything you want in America, the snakehead says. Color televisions. Big cars. Dollars by the millions. It's all there, waiting to be claimed...

... A thin man carrying a box of uncooked cakes drops them when he sees a policeman because he does not have a licence to sell cakes on the streets.

Six months ago this man left his wife and child in the Fujian province where neighbors paid \$20.000 to a gang to transport him to the U.S.. The idea was that he should make a fortune for them all. Instead, he is selling nine cakes for \$2 and earns about \$15 a day. He speaks no English. He is not even certain that he is in New York. He knows only this -he is in America. Hiss.>>

<(NA, Jan 1, 1994)

The writer uses here the strategy of echoic irony: he echoes the supposed utterances used by the gangsters (whom he ironically calls "snakeheads") to cheat their victims: "You can have anything you want in America, etc." is repeated echoically in order to complain about the fact that these foreign people are fooled by the gangsters, since what they encounter once they get to America is very different from what they had been told they would encounter. The metaphor of the snake is another strategy used to fulfil the function of complaint and protest in an ironic manner.

Example [3] in 9.4.2.2, as well as examples [1] and [2] in 9.4.2.9, also fulfil the function of complaining about some particularly unfair or undesirable situation (as seen from the writer's point of view). A great number of the examples of

verbal irony found in B. Russell's works fulfil a complaining as well as a denouncing function. He denounces those people who, according to his views, threaten the well-being or the prosperity of our society.

9.4.2.14 REPROACH

Verbal irony is, at times, intended as a reproach. When someone, for instance, thanks another person sarcastically (when, in fact, the speaker is not grateful but annoyed at some misconduct of his/her interlocutor), s/he does it in order to reproach the interlocutor with such misconduct.

[1] Dorothy uses irony in the following dialogue to fulfil this function. She reproaches Blanche with selfishness:

Dorothy: I'm just over my head. I mean, what with the banquet, press releases, petitions to be signed.
Ma, what am I going to do?

Blanche: I'll help.

Dorothy: Ah, Blanche, that's sweet. But, honey, aren't your hands tied with all the work that you're doing for... you?

Blanche: I know I'm not always the first one to volunteer, but...
(GG, 1991: 197)

Dorothy's words show a contrast of apparent kindness and understanding with real criticism. The question "But, honey, aren't your hands..." takes an unexpected turn at the end, when after the strategic pause Dorothy uses the pronoun "you", which

changes the apparent tone of her utterance from an innocent question into a reproach. In this way, Dorothy accuses Blanche of being selfish and never wanting to help others.

[2] The contribution made by Hacker's wife in the following dyad also has to be understood as an ironic utterance functioning as a reproach:

Hacker: You're very tense!

Hacker's wife: Oh, no! I'm not tense. I'm just a politician's wife. I'm not likely to have feelings. A happy, carefree politician's wife.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

The whole episode presents Hacker's wife as very discontent and unhappy with the fact that her husband has been appointed Minister of Administrative Affairs. She always complains about not spending enough time together, and, consequently, she loses no opportunity to reproach him for all the inconveniences that his new job have brought to their family life.

9.4.2.15 DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE (so as to realign the participants to include someone, or transform the impending monologue into a more balanced conversation)

This function has been found in two of the corpora analysed, namely, the LLC and the GG corpora. This is a conversational function, and, consequently, it is not to be found in any written piece of discourse. Therefore, the newspaper

articles and Russell's works are excluded from the analysis of this function. The disruption of the prevailing structure in a conversation may carry along with it the fulfilment of other functions such as the realignment of the participants of discourse (in order to include someone) or the transformation of an impending monologue into a more balanced conversation. The latter case is clearly materialized by Sophia in the dialogue analysed in 9.4.2.1 (e.g. [3]) as an example of topic closure. In it, Rose starts speaking about her experience in hospitals without letting any of the other girls participate, to a point where they get tired of her monologue, until Sophia replies: "Rose, you'll excuse me. We'll get back to your fascinating hospital story later". Sophia's contribution not only closes the topic of conversation but also disrupts the turn-taking structure, and this has the effect of balancing the conversation so that the other participants can take their turns.

Sophia is one of the two ironists of the Golden Girls (the other one is her daughter Dorothy), and she occasionally uses irony not only to interrupt her roommates' monologues, but also to introduce herself in the conversation, as can be observed in the following exchange:

[1]

(Dorothy, Blanche and Rose are talking about Blanche's sister, who has to have a kidney operation)

Blanche: She's going into renal failure. So a transplant is her best hope.

Dorothy: Oh, honey. I'm so sorry.

Rose: What happens if she doesn't get the kidney?

Blanche: She'll die.

Rose: You hold her life in your hands. What are you gonna do?

Blanche: I don't know.

Sophia: I'm glad you're not my sister.

(GG, 1991: 48)

Ever since the beginning of the scene Sophia had been present without participating in the conversation. She finally makes herself notorious with her pungent ironic comment "I'm glad you're not my sister", and disrupts the previous turn-taking structure to introduce herself in the conversation. Needless to say, Sophia's comment is ironic in that she is telling Blanche in an indirect way that she (Sophia) thinks Blanche is not generous enough to donate one of her kidneys to save her sister's life. The ultimate implicature of her utterance is that Sophia would die if she were her sister, and that is why she is glad she is not.

9.4.2.16 INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE

One of the various functions of ironic discourse has to do with the exhibition of cleverness or wit on the part of the participants. Since verbal irony often constitutes a linguistic game, there may be occasions on which a contest is set up among the participants, the winner of which will be that participant that makes the wittiest and cleverest ironic remark. This is certainly the case of the ritual insults used by New York black adolescents (which have been discussed at different points in

this study as examples of Positive irony) and of the so-called "customary joking relationships" (Norrick, 1993) that may be established among a given group of people. Although there are no examples of ritual insults or of the language used in customary joking relationships in the corpora studied herein, there are a few instances in which the irony used by the speaker can be interpreted as an attempt on his/her part to outdo his/her partner's wit. Such is the case of Hacker's remarks in the following two situations:

[1]

(When Hacker asked Humphrey for some information about the previous Minister in the scene previous to this one, Humphrey's answer was: "Minister, my lips are sealed.")

Humphrey: Where did you get those proposals from?

Hacker: Humphrey, my lips are sealed.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Big Brother")

[2]

(Humphrey has been hiding a great deal of information from Hacker. Now Hacker wants to outdo Humphrey's wit and gives all sorts of ironic and ambiguous answers to Humphrey's questions)

Humphrey: Minister, I must ask you for a straight answer.
Tomorrow? Monday? Tuesday?

Hacker: In due course, Humphrey. At the appropriate juncture, in the fullness of time. When the moment is right. When the necessary procedures have been completed. Nothing precipitate, of course.

Humphrey: Minister, this is getting urgent.

Hacker: Oh! What a lot of new words we are learning!

Humphrey: Now Minister, you'll forgive me about saying this, but I'm beginning to suspect you're concealing something from me.

Hacker: Oh, surely you and I have no secrets from each other, have we, Humphrey?

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

In both [1] and [2], Hacker uses different ironic strategies in order to outdo Humphrey's previous display of wit. Hacker is now taking his revenge and uses the strategy of echoic irony to make Humphrey suffer with the same weapon he previously used against Hacker. Hacker now keeps a secret from Humphrey by answering him with the same words Humphrey had previously used to keep information away from Hacker ([1]). In [2], Hacker uses the same kind of ambiguous answers Humphrey has always given him ("In due course, etc....") as well as the strategy of overgeneralization ("What a lot of new words we are learning!"), to show Humphrey that he is no fool and that he is consequently more intelligent than him (Humphrey).

I noted at the beginning of this point (9.4.3.16) that this function is one of the functions frequently fulfilled by positive ironic discourse. I now turn to the last of the specific functions analysed herein, which also has to do with positive irony.

9.4.2.17 MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

As has been noted previously in this work (chapter 8), very few cases of Positive verbal irony were found in the corpora studied, but, in the instances found (as well as in all cases of Positive irony) the function fulfilled by the ironic utterance

is either to praise or to show some kind of positive feeling (like respect or admiration) towards the person, situation or thing in question.

When the writer of the article whose excerpt is presented in 9.4.2.6 (e.g. [2]) says that "Conchita Martínez can play a bit too", he is using Positive irony to express his admiration and respect for her. Or when A (a female academic) says to B (a male academic) that Malcolm could help him (B) if he got stuck (see 5.3.2, e.g. [3]), she is joking and trying to praise B, for B is a computer programmer, and what she means is that he (B) will not get stuck since he knows a lot about computers.

The above examples are the only two examples of positive irony found in the corpora, but it is not difficult to see that the function in question herein is also the function of other examples of Positive irony discussed in this work such as:

"How small you have grown!" (said to a child after two years of absence)
"They tell me you're a slow runner." (said to a runner that has just won a race)
"I don't love you at all." (said to one's girlfriend/boyfriend/husband/wife or lover in an intimate moment)

Having discussed and exemplified the discourse functions of the pieces of ironic discourse found in the five corpora studied herein, I shall proceed to the quantitative analysis of these functions as they appear in the corpora.

All the functions discussed hitherto are summarized and illustrated in Figure 9a.

Figure 9a: DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF VERBAL IRONY

A) GENERAL	1- VERBAL ATTACK
	2- AMUSEMENT
	3- EVALUATION
B) SPECIFIC	1- TOPIC CLOSURE
	2- TOPIC CONCLUSION
	3- TOPIC SHIFT
	4- TOPIC COMMENT
	5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION
	6- RAPPORT BUILDING/CREATION OF SOLIDARITY
	7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK
	8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF
	9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT
	10- MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST
	11- MANIFESTATION OF POWER
	12- TEASING/POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR
	13- COMPLAINT
	14- REPROACH
	15- DISRUPTION OF THE TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE
	16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT
	17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

9.4.3 Quantitative Analysis: A study of the frequencies of occurrence of the different functions of ironic discourse identified in the five corpora used in this piece of research

In order to have a more accurate idea of the actual incidence of each of the functions found for ironic discourse, an account has been made of their frequencies of occurrence within each of the corpora. As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, the type of discourse or genre may be an influencing variable for the fulfilment of one function or another. Therefore, tables and charts of results will be presented separately for each of the corpora. However, a final analysis will be made of each of the functions with respect to the total number of examples of ironic discourse found (which, as we know from other chapters, is 351).

The statistical chi-squared test will be carried out so as to find out whether the frequencies of occurrence of both the general and the specific functions vary (in a significant way) for the different corpora.

Firstly, I shall present the data corresponding to the three main and more general functions discussed in 9.4.1, namely, VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT and EVALUATION. Secondly, the frequency of occurrence of the more specific functions discussed in 9.4.2 will be presented for each of the corpora investigated.

9.4.3.1 Data resulting from the quantitative analysis of the three general functions of verbal irony

The number and percentage of occurrences of the three general discourse functions of verbal irony can be observed in tables 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 (for each of the corpora) and 9.6 (total). It is worth noticing here that neither function is fulfilled to the exclusion of the other two; therefore there may be cases in which the three functions are realised by the same ironic utterance. That is why the sum of the individual percentages does not equal 100%.

TABLES 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 AND 9.5: NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES AND PERCENTAGE OF THE THREE GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF VERBALLY IRONIC DISCOURSE: VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT AND EVALUATION

A) Spoken Corpora

a) LLC (9.1)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ. (out of 86)	62	32	85
%	72.9	37.21	98.84

As was specified in 9.3.2, when analysing the functions of the two television programmes, a distinction should be made between a) the function intended by the writers of the episodes and b) those intended by the characters as participants of discourse. As regards the former, it can be said that all the instances of verbal irony fulfil the function of AMUSEMENT (100%, tables 9.2.i and 9.3.i). As regards the latter, tables 9.2.ii and 9.3.ii display the frequencies found for each of the three general

functions.

b) GG (9.2.i)

	V.ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ. (out of 84)	0	84	0
%	0	100	0

(9.2.ii)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ. (out of 84)	65	7	83
%	77.38	8.33	98.80

c) YM (9.3.i)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ. (out of 55)	0	55	0
%	0	100	0

(9.3.ii)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ. (out of 55)	37	1	50
%	67.27	1.82	90.91

B) Written Corpora

a) BR (9.4)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ. (out of 46)	44	2	45
%	95.65	4.35	97.83

b) NA (9.5)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ. (out of 80)	70	23	78
%	87.5	28.75	97.5

Tables 9.6a and 9.6b: Total number and percentage of occurrences of the functions VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT and EVALUATION in the corpora analysed

9.6a) Considering the functions in the GG and YM corpora as intended by the writers of the episodes

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ.(out of 351)	176	196	208
%	50.14	55.84	59.25

9.6b) Considering the functions in the GG and YM corpora as intended by the characters in the episodes

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
N° of occ.(out of 351)	278	65	341
%	79.20	18.52	97.15

The data shown in the above tables is graphically represented in Figures 9b, 9c, 9d, and 9e.

Fig. 9b. Distribution of the variables verbal attack, amusement & evaluation (Considering the functions intended by the authors in the GG & YM corpora)

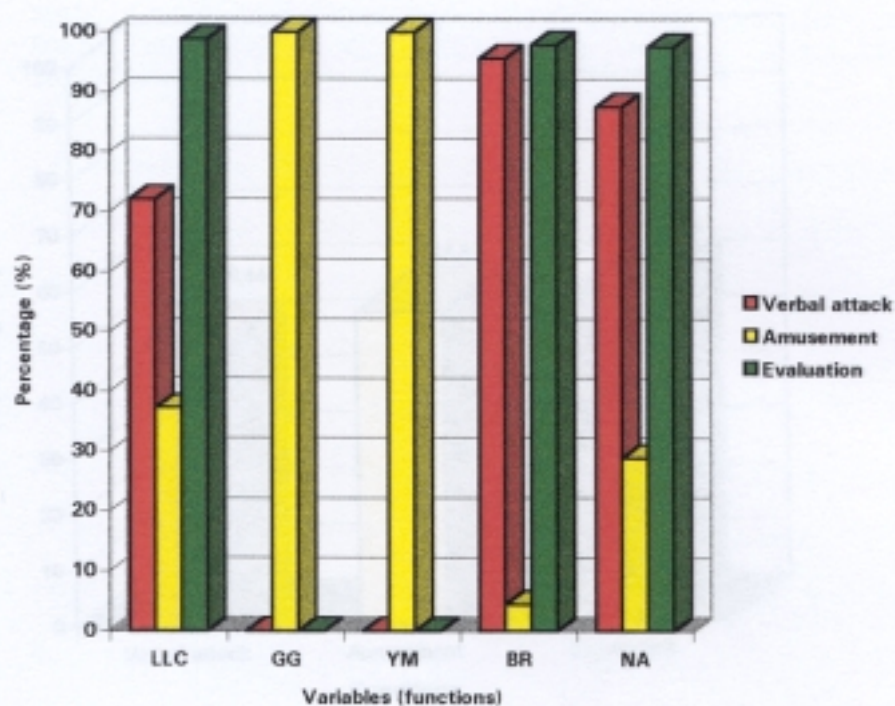


Fig. 9c. Distribution of the variables verbal attack, amusement & evaluation (Considering the functions intended by the characters in the GG & YM corpora)

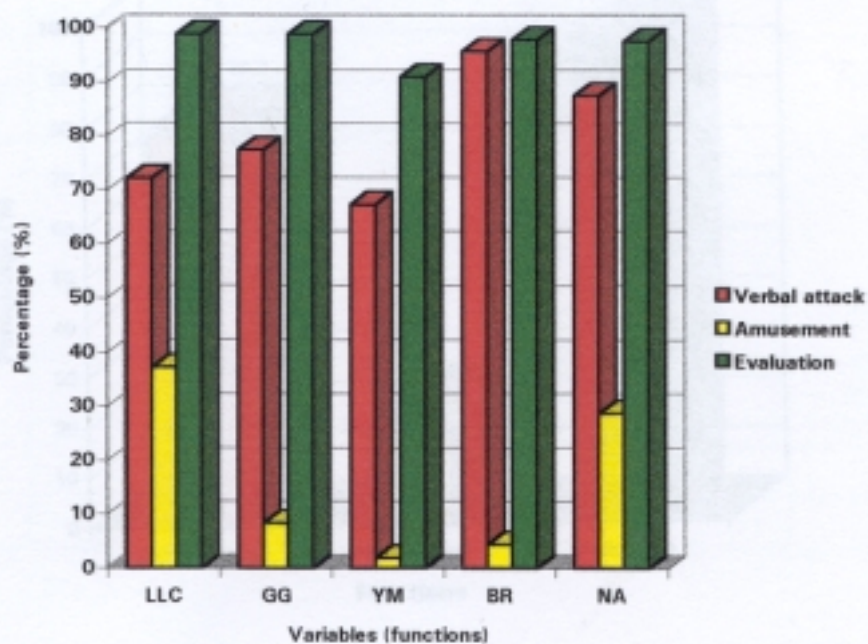


Fig. 9d. Barchart of the total occurrence of the three main functions (Considering the functions intended by the authors in the GG & YM corpora)

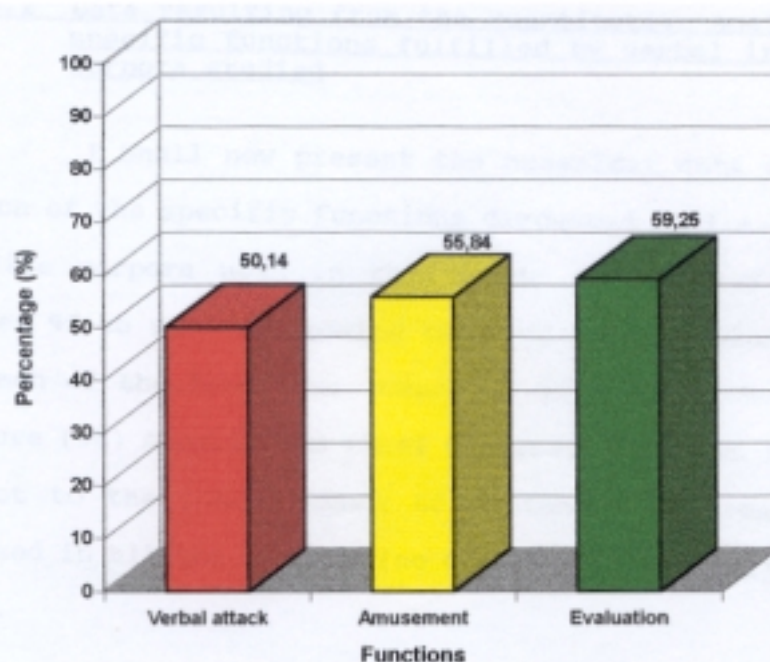
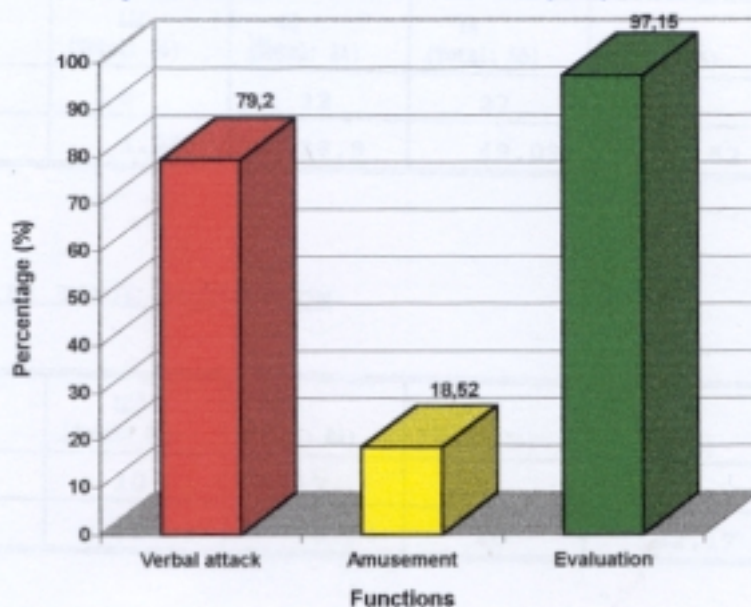


Fig. 9e. Barchart of the total occurrence of the three main functions (Considering the functions intended by the characters in the GG & YM corpora)



9.4.3.2 Data resulting from the quantitative analysis of the specific functions fulfilled by verbal irony in the corpora studied

I shall now present the numerical data corresponding to each of the specific functions discussed in 9.4.2 for each of the five corpora used in this study (Tables 9.7 to 9.23 and figures 9f to 9j). Following the individual tables and figures for each of the functions, there is a general table (9.24) and a figure (9k) showing the total occurrence of each function with respect to the total number of instances of ironic discourse analysed in all the corpora (no distinctions of corpora are made here).

Table 9.7: TOPIC CLOSURE

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	6	32	27	26	21
%	6.98	38.9	49.09	56.52	26.25

Table 9.8: TOPIC CONCLUSION

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	10	17	11	24	15
%	11.63	20.24	20	52.17	18.75

Table 9.9: TOPIC SHIFT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	5	0	1	0	0
%	5.81	0	1.82	0	0

Table 9.10: TOPIC COMMENT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	0	3	6	15	26
%	0	3.57	10.91	32.61	32.5

Table 9.11: TOPIC INTRODUCTION

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	0	0	1	0	10
%	0	0	1.82	0	12.5

Table 9.12: RAPPORT BUILDING

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	9	0	0	0	1
%	10.46	0	0	0	1.25

Table 9.13: GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	4	0	0	0	2
%	4.65	0	0	0	2.5

Table 9.14: PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	4	0	0	1	2
%	4.65	0	0	2.17	0

Table 9.15: CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	3	0	0	1	2
%	3.49	0	0	2.17	2.5

Table 9.16: MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	2	2	1	0	0
%	2.33	2.38	1.82	0	0

Table 9.17: MANIFESTATION OF POWER

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	5	0	0	0	0
%	5.81	0	0	0	0

Table 9.18: TEASING/POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	4	18	3	0	0
%	4.65	21.43	5.45	0	0

Table 9.19: COMPLAINT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	2	2	0	22	16
%	2.33	2.38	0	47.83	20

Table 9.20: REPROACH

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	1	7	6	3	0
%	1.16	8.33	10.91	6.52	0

Table 9.21: DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	1	7	0	0	0
%	1.16	8.33	0	0	0

Table 9.22: INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	0	0	7	0	0
%	0	0	12.73	0	0

Table 9.23: MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
N° of occ.	1	0	0	0	1
%	1.16	0	0	0	1.25

The data in tables 9.7 to 9.23 is graphically represented in Figures 9f, 9g, 9h, 9i, and 9j.

Fig. 9f. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions of the LLC

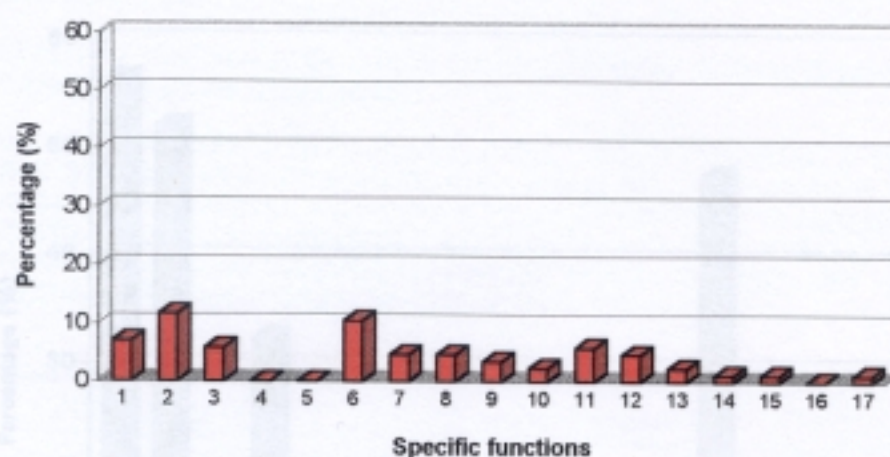


Fig. 9g. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions for the GG

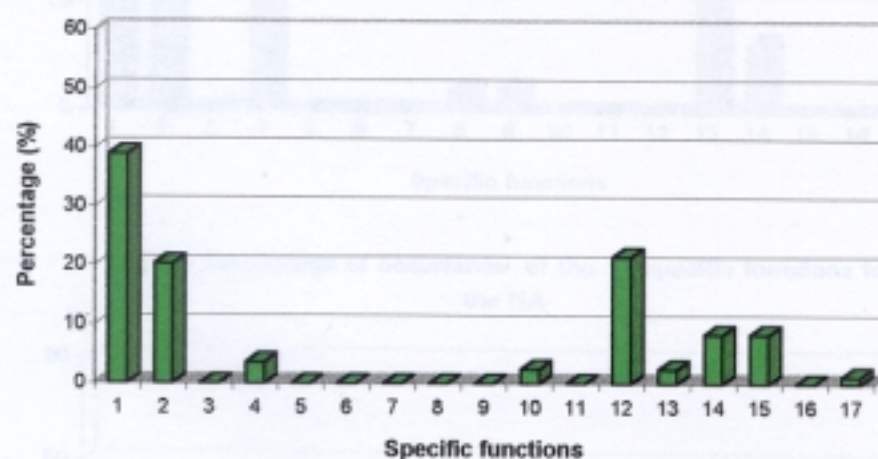


Fig. 9h. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions for the YM

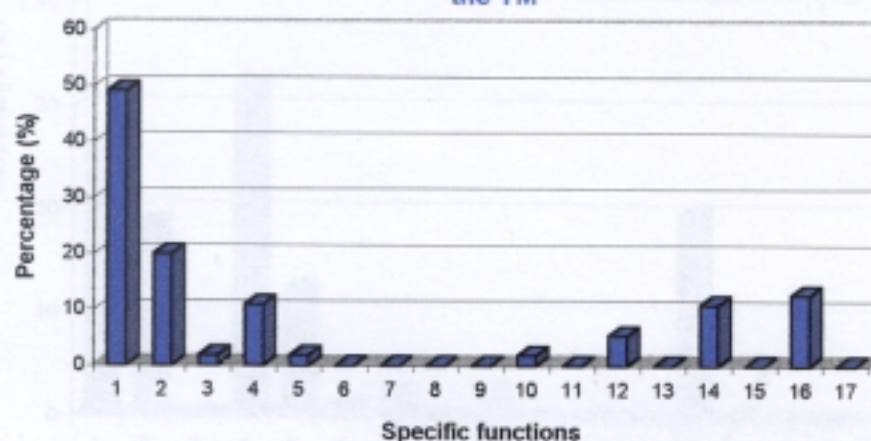


Fig. 9i. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions of the BR

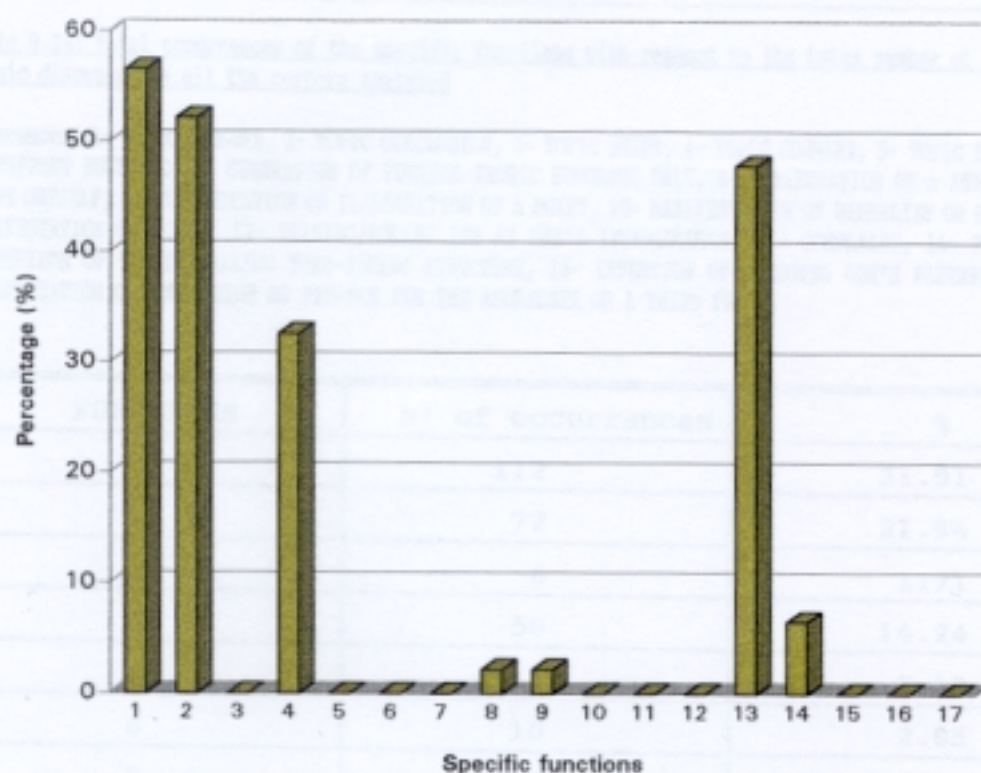


Fig. 9j. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions for the NA

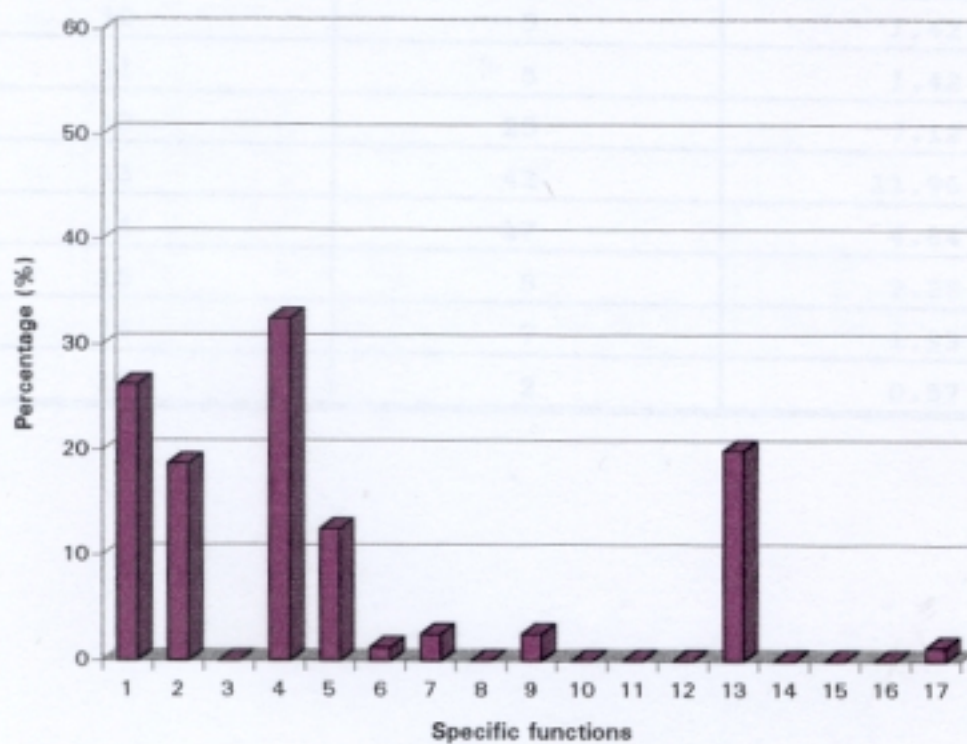
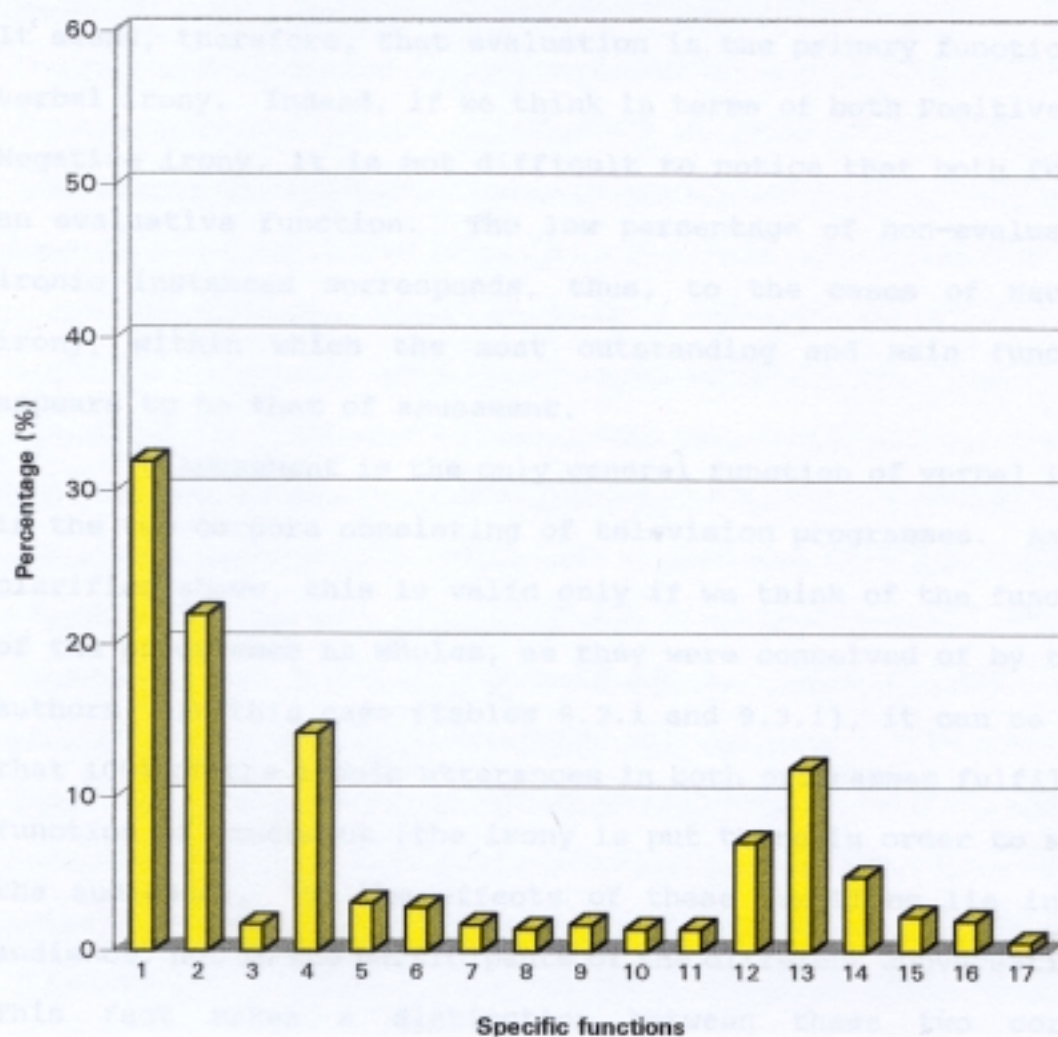


Table 9.24: Total occurrences of the specific functions with respect to the total number of instances of ironic discourse in all the corpora analysed

References: 1- TOPIC CLOSURE, 2- TOPIC CONCLUSION, 3- TOPIC SHIFT, 4- TOPIC COMMENT, 5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION, 6- RAPPORT BUILDING, 7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC HUMOROUS TALK, 8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF, 9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT, 10- MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST, 11- MANIFESTATION OF POWER, 12- TEASING/POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR, 13- COMPLAINT, 14- REPROACH, 15- DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE, 16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT, 17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY.

FUNCTIONS	N° of occurrences	%
1	112	31.91
2	77	21.94
3	6	1.71
4	50	14.24
5	11	3.13
6	10	2.85
7	6	1.71
8	5	1.42
9	6	1.71
10	5	1.42
11	5	1.42
12	25	7.12
13	42	11.96
14	17	4.84
15	8	2.28
16	7	1.99
17	2	0.57

Fig. 9k.Total occurrence of the 17 specific discourse functions with respect to the total n° (351) of instances of verbal irony analysed in the corpora



9.4.3.3 Discussion of the results

The results concerning the three general functions of verbal attack, amusement and evaluation place the function of evaluation as the one having the highest frequency of occurrence. It seems, therefore, that evaluation is the primary function of verbal irony. Indeed, if we think in terms of both Positive and Negative irony, it is not difficult to notice that both fulfil an evaluative function. The low percentage of non-evaluative ironic instances corresponds, thus, to the cases of Neutral irony, within which the most outstanding and main function appears to be that of amusement.

Amusement is the only general function of verbal irony in the two corpora consisting of television programmes. As was clarified above, this is valid only if we think of the function of the programmes as wholes, as they were conceived of by their authors. In this case (tables 9.2.1 and 9.3.1), it can be said that 100% of the ironic utterances in both programmes fulfil the function of amusement (the irony is put there in order to amuse the audience). So the effects of these functions lie in the audience, not in the participants of the different conversations. This fact makes a distinction between these two corpora (displaying the genre of television comedies, and the other three corpora, whose language displays different discourse types (as was noted in 9.3)).

However, I could not disregard the fact that each utterance also has a function conceived in terms of the

intentions of the characters that use verbal irony in agreement with the context and social relations established by them within the plot of the episodes in which the ironic language in question is used. Therefore, I had to consider the results also in terms of this variable (tables 9.2.ii and 9.3.ii), and here the picture changes completely, for the function of amusement has a very low frequency of occurrence: both in the GG and the YM series, the characters use verbal irony to fulfil the function of evaluation (98.80% for GG and 90.91% for YM) or of verbal attack (77.38% for GG and 67.27% for YM). Only on very few occasions do the characters use irony to amuse their interlocutors.

Concerning the functions of amusement and verbal attack with respect to the other three corpora, it can be observed that:

- * Amusement does not have a very high frequency of occurrence in any of the three (37.21% for LLC, 4.35% for BR and 28.75% for NA). The percentage of the BR corpus is the lowest, and this is related to the type of discourse in question: all of Russell's works contain argumentative prose of a philosophical nature, intended to provide logical reasoning for social problems that are denounced and criticised. Russell wants to make his readers aware of these problems and possibly also to make them act against them. Therefore, it is not strange that the amusement function should not be fulfilled very frequently by his discourse.

- * Verbal attack has high percentages of occurrence in all five corpora (72.09% in LLC, 77.38% in GG, 67.27% in YM, 95.65% in BR, and 87.5% in NA). This is a result that had been expected, since

verbal attack is an inherent function of most cases of Negative irony. It is noteworthy that the percentages of this function are higher for the written corpora than for the spoken ones. A possible reason for this could be the fact that, in personal conversations (which is the type of discourse that predominates in the spoken texts analysed), people do not dare attack their interlocutors or even a third party so much or with such great intensity as they dare do in writing, in which case they do not have to confront their victims in a personal, physical manner.

* All in all, the total account of frequencies displays the highest occurrence for the evaluative function of irony. Following in rate of frequency are amusement and then verbal attack (if we consider the functions of the two television programmes as wholes); or verbal attack and then amusement (if we consider the functions of the ironic utterances in the television programmes as intended by the characters to have an effect on other characters within the episodes).

* The results of the chi-squared test (applied to the results considering both the functions intended by the authors of the television series and those intended by the characters) show that the frequencies of occurrence of the different general functions of verbal irony are different for the different corpora analysed, which implies that, as expected, the discourse functions of irony vary depending on the type of discourse (see Appendix 4, hypothesis n° 13a).

I shall now refer to each of the specific functions in particular:

- **Topic closure:** Table 9.7 shows that the highest percentage of occurrence of this function is that of the BR corpus. As was noted in 9.4.2.1, the ironic piece of discourse that closes the topic generally coincides with the closure of a paragraph. 56.52% of the instances of ironic discourse in this corpus fulfil the function of topic closure. The lowest percentage of occurrence for this function is found in the LLC (6.98%). Even when in normal conversation topic closure is a possible function of ironic utterances, it appears to be the case that, on many other occasions, ironic language generates further conversation about the topic in question, or may serve as topic conclusion, but not as topic closure. The other three corpora (GG, YM and NA) present relatively high percentages of occurrence for this function (38.9%, 49.09% and 26.25% respectively). The results yielded by the quantitative analysis show that the function of topic closure is one of considerable importance and considerable frequency of use among speakers who choose verbal irony as a strategy.

- **Topic conclusion:** The function of topic conclusion (table 9.8) presents the highest percentage of occurrence within the BR corpus (52.17%). Next in importance of frequency come the GG (20.24%), the YM (20%) and the NA (18.75%). Once more, the lowest percentage of occurrence is that of the LLC (11.63%). However, topic conclusion has turned out to be a more frequent function than topic closure in this corpus.

- **Topic shift:** Topic shift does not present high percentages of occurrence in any of the corpora studied (table 9.9). LLC is the

corpus where this function presents the highest number of occurrences, but, even so, this number only amounts to five occurrences (5.81%). The only one of the other four corpora in which this function was found is the YM one, with only one occurrence (1.82%). The other three did not present instances of the fulfilment of this function. Topic closure and topic conclusion appear to be much more important for ironic discourse.

- **Topic comment:** The highest percentages of occurrence of this function have been found in the two written corpora (32.61% and 32.5% of the total occurrences of ironic discourse in each corpus). It has proved to be a much less frequent function within spoken discourse: 10.91% of the ironic utterances in YM fulfil this function, and only 3.57% and 0% of the utterances do so in the GG and LLC respectively.

- **Topic introduction:** This function presents the highest number of occurrences within the NA corpus (12.5%). As was noted in 9.4.2.5, an ironic headline sometimes serves as the topic introducer for a journalistic article. One more occurrence of this function was found in the YM corpus, but no occurrences of it were registered in any of the three remaining corpora. Therefore, it seems that this is a function not very frequently used in ironic discourse. However, its importance within the journalistic genre has to be taken into account.

- **Rapport-building/creation of solidarity among the participants of discourse:** The LLC is the corpus that contains more occurrences of this function (10.46% of the total occurrence of ironic utterances). This function has not appeared in the GG,

YM or BR corpora, and, in the NA corpus only one occurrence of it was found (1.25%). Rapport-building may be, at times, the sole function of ironic discourse; however, it does not appear to be one of its most frequent functions.

- **Generation of further ironic-humorous talk:** Table 9.13 displays the results for this function, which shows the highest percentages of occurrence within the LLC (4.65%). Even though this is the highest percentage, it is a low one and reveals the low frequency of occurrence of the function. Three of the corpora do not present this function at all, and, in the NA corpus, it only has two occurrences (2.5%).

- **Presentation of a sense of humour about oneself:** The highest percentage of occurrence of this function is found in the LLC (4.65%). In BR, there is only one instance of it (2.17%), and, in the other three corpora, no examples of this function were found. Again, this function can not be said to be very frequent within ironic discourse.

- **Clarification or illustration of a point:** This function is fulfilled by a few ironic utterances in three of the corpora (LLC, BR and NA). The frequency of occurrence is higher in the LLC (3.49%), but it does not appear as an outstanding function of ironic discourse. No instances of the function were found in two of the corpora (GG and YM), and this may be due to the fact that the primary functions of irony in these two programmes are *amusement* (in terms of the intentions of the authors of the episode with respect to their audience) and *verbal attack* (in terms of the characters' intentions towards their "victims").

- **Manifestation of disbelief or distrust:** This function has been found for ironic discourse only within the spoken corpora. There are no occurrences of it in the two written ones. This may be due to the more interactional nature of spoken discourse. Users of a language may respond to something said or done by other users by using ironic discourse that shows disbelief in what the first user said or did. This does not appear to be common in written discourse (although it does not seem impossible). The percentages of occurrence in the spoken corpora are rather low, which permits the researcher to conclude that this is not a very common function within ironic discourse.
- **Manifestation of power:** Even though, on some occasions, the use of irony may reveal that the speaker has power over his/her interlocutors (see 5.5.2), the function fulfilled by his/her ironic utterance may not always be to show this power. Indeed, very few instances of this function have been found in this analysis. The only corpus where this function is apparently fulfilled by some ironic utterances is the LLC. Here, 5.81% of the utterances are intended to fulfil the function of manifesting the speaker's power. The other four corpora do not present instances of this function, even though it can often be said that the person using verbal irony is a person in power.
- **Teasing/poking fun at one's interlocutor:** Instances of fulfilment of this function have only been found in the spoken corpora, which is logical if we consider that, in the case of the written examples, there is no interlocutor present for a writer to tease. However, it does not seem unreasonable to think of the

possibility of a writer who might want to tease his/her readers by using verbal irony. The corpus in which verbal irony most seems to fulfil this function is the GG (21.43% of occurrences). Following are YM (5.45%) and LLC (4.65%). The nature of the relationship among the frequent interlocutors of the GG explains the higher incidence of this function in this corpus. The girls are very close friends, and, even though irony is used mainly as a verbal attack among them, on many occasions it only has to be taken as a form of teasing, without any serious intention of hurting anybody's feelings.

- **Complaint:** The results of the analysis yield BR as the definite "winner" as regards the use of this function of verbal irony (47.83% of the total occurrences within this corpus fulfil this function). This result had been expected, considering the "denouncing" character of Russell's writing. He accuses society and some of its institutions for being hypocrites and for many other things he judges improper or unfair, and, therefore, many times a complaining tone can be perceived in his ironic discourse. Following in rate of frequency of occurrence is the NA corpus (20% of occurrences), which reveals written discourse as the type of discourse where this function presents higher frequencies of occurrence. Instances of this function have been found in two of the spoken corpora (LLC and GG), but its occurrence is comparatively low (2.33% and 2.38% respectively).
- **Reproach:** The fulfilment of this function has been found in the ironic discourse of four of the corpora studied (LLC, GG, YM and BR). The highest occurrence is found in the YM corpus

(10.91%). The GG and BR corpora have lower percentages of occurrence, but they are still significant (8.33% and 6.52% respectively). Only one occurrence of reproach was found in the LLC and none in the NA. Here there are no marked differences between the spoken and the written corpora. There appears to be a tendency for this function to be more used in spoken discourse, but its percentage of occurrence is much lower in the LLC (a spoken corpus) than in the BR (a written one). It is the characters of the television series -rather than any other of the ironic speakers/writers in the corpora analysed- who seem to prefer this function most.

- **Disruption of the prevailing turn-taking structure:** This function is fulfilled by a few instances of ironic discourse in only two of the corpora studied herein: the GG and the LLC. This function can not appear in the written corpora, since we can not speak of a turn-taking structure in written discourse. As was shown and exemplified in 9.4.2.15, the disruption of the prevailing turn-taking structure has its highest percentage of occurrence in the GG corpus (8.33%). Only one instance of it (1.16%) has been found in the LLC. These figures tell us that the the function in question does not seem to be one of the most prominent functions of verbal irony.

- **Intention of outdoing one's partner's wit:** This function has not proved to be frequent for the ironic discourse in the corpora here studied. The only corpus which presents instances of speakers using irony in order to outdo their partner's wit is the YM corpus (12.73% of occurrences). This is explicable in terms

of the relationship between its protagonists, Hacker and Humphrey (Hacker has understood Humphrey's intentions to cheat him, and, therefore, he tries to show him -by using ironic language- that he is no longer fooled and that he can outdo Humphrey's wit). The results of this survey, then, show that this is not one of the most frequent functions of ironic discourse.

- *Manifestation of admiration or respect for the addressee or a third party:* As was noted in 9.4.2.17, this is a function which is fulfilled only by Positive irony, and, consequently, it is not surprising to find out that it is not a frequent function, since we already know that very few occurrences of Positive irony were found in the corpora under study. Only two occurrences of this function were found, one in the LLC and the other in the NA corpus (which represent 1.16% and 1.25% of occurrences respectively).

The table showing the total number of occurrences of each of the above functions (table 9.24) places the function of *Topic closure* as the most important from the viewpoint of frequency of occurrence (31.91% of the total number of instances of ironic discourse of the corpora studied fulfil this function). Following in importance are *Topic conclusion* (with 21.94% of occurrences), *Topic comment* (14.24%), *Complaint* (11.96%) and *Teasing* (7.12%). The other functions present lower frequencies, the lowest of which is the *Manifestation of admiration or respect for the addressee or a third party*, which, as was explained above, is always a function of the Positive kind of verbal irony,

and, therefore, its frequency is as low as the frequency of occurrence of this type of irony (see 8.5.1).

- The results of the statistical chi-squared test show that, as was expected, the frequencies of occurrence of the different specific functions of verbal irony are different for the written and the spoken corpora (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 13b). Again, it can be said that the type of discourse influences the function of the intended ironic utterance or contribution.

9.5 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse and classify the functions of ironic discourse. At an abstract and very general level it has been stated that the interactional function of language (Brown & Yule, 1983) seems to predominate in the LLC, the GG, the YM and the BR corpora. In the NA corpus, there seems to be a balance between both the transactional and the interactional functions. Some of the uses to which irony is put in the NA and the BR corpora (the written corpora) evoke Halliday's textual function (i.e., when writers organise their text in such a way that verbal irony signals the headline, or the beginning, middle or end of a paragraph to obtain certain effects). This "organisational" function is also observed in the spoken corpora, however, when the speakers place their ironic remarks to mark, for instance, the closure of a topic. Jakobson's phatic, conative and metalinguistic functions could

also be identified for cases in the different corpora analysed. But since these categories are too general and do not say much about what the users of English can do with verbal irony, a more detailed analysis of the functions was made, through which more specific functions could be identified for ironic discourse. Within these specific functions, I still found different levels of generality; hence, at a more general level, the three main functions of EVALUATION, VERBAL ATTACK and AMUSEMENT were identified, and, at a more specific level of analysis, seventeen other functions were found to be fulfilled by verbal irony. These seventeen functions are the following: 1- TOPIC CLOSURE, 2- TOPIC CONCLUSION, 3- TOPIC SHIFT, 4- TOPIC COMMENT, 5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION, 6- RAPPORT BUILDING, 7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK, 8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF, 9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT, 10- MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST, 11- MANIFESTATION OF POWER, 12- TEASING, 13- COMPLAINT, 14- REPROACH, 15- DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE, 16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT and 17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY.

Any of the more specific functions may co-occur with any of the more general functions, although there are some of them that are prototypically fulfilled by a given type of irony; for instance, the manifestation of admiration or respect (specific function n° 17) can not co-occur with the more general function of verbal attack, for the former is a function of Positive irony, and the latter one of Negative irony. But the

point being made here is that all of the ironic utterances studied in this analysis can be said to fulfil at least one of the three general functions, and that, at the same time, they may fulfil one or more of the specific functions that have been identified herein. A discussion has been made of these functions, together with the analysis of examples of the realisations of each of them (qualitative analysis). Following this, a quantitative analysis of the frequencies of occurrence of the functions has been presented, whose results have led me to the following conclusions:

- Evaluation can be said to be the predominant function of verbal irony. Of the three more general functions, evaluation presented the highest frequency of occurrence.
- Amusement and verbal attack are also functions having high frequencies of occurrence. In the corpora analysed, amusement turned out to be more frequent than verbal attack if, in the two corpora containing episodes of television programmes, the functions of such programmes as wholes (concerning their authors' intentions) were taken into account. If, on the other hand, the functions considered were those intended by the ironic speakers in the context of the episodes in question, the function of verbal attack takes predominance over the amusement function.
- The three general functions of verbal attack, amusement and evaluation may be fulfilled by instances of ironic discourse of the negative type. Both amusement and evaluation may be functions of Positive irony, whereas verbal attack obviously may not. Neither verbal attack nor evaluation can be functions of

the Neutral type of ironic discourse; the only general function observed for these cases is that of amusement. This information is summarized in Figure 91.

Figure 91: General functions of the three main types of verbal irony

TYPE OF IRONY	GENERAL FUNCTIONS
NEGATIVE	Evaluation, verbal attack and/or amusement
POSITIVE	Evaluation and/or amusement
NEUTRAL	Amusement (only)

This information permits us to establish a correlation between the strategies used by the speaker/writer and the general functions intended; i.e., when a speaker only wants to fulfil the function of amusement by means of verbal irony, s/he can use any of the three kinds of strategies labelled A, B or C in this study (see chapter 8); when s/he wants to fulfil the function of evaluation, s/he may use strategies A and/or B (never C); and if s/he wants to fulfil the function of verbal attack, s/he can only use strategies A (never B or C). This correlation is illustrated in Figure 9m.

Figure 9m: Correlation of the general functions and strategies of verbal irony

<i>FUNCTIONS</i>	<i>STRATEGIES</i>
<i>AMUSEMENT</i>	A, B and/or C
<i>EVALUATION</i>	A and/or B
<i>VERBAL ATTACK</i>	A (only)

- Among the more specific functions, topic closure, topic conclusion and topic comment turned out to be the most frequent in general terms. Complaint, teasing and reproach follow in importance (Figure 9k). These data permit the researcher to associate verbal irony to certain important functions of language and discourse organisation. Topic closure and topic conclusion frequently coincide in the same ironic utterance; i.e., a speaker may choose the superstrategy of verbal irony in order to give a conclusion on the topic of discourse and at the same time to close it. However, sometimes these two functions do not coincide, and it may be the case that a speaker uses verbal irony to give a conclusion on a topic but not to close it.

- Topic shift did not turn out to be a very frequent function of ironic discourse, whereas topic comment presented a higher occurrence in the written corpora than in the spoken ones. Topic introduction has turned out to be a much more frequent function of the ironic language in journalistic discourse (NA corpus) than in the other types of discourse analysed. It seems to be the case that journalists often choose verbal irony as a strategy for the headline of an article, in order to mark the introduction of

its topic.

- Since irony is often connected to humour, it is not difficult to associate it with the building of rapport or solidarity among the participants of discourse; however, this function can not be labelled as one of the more frequent within the ironic discourse found in the corpora.

- Other functions which, though fulfilled by some of the utterances in the corpora, have not proved to be very frequent are: the generation of further ironic-humorous talk, the presentation of a sense of humour about oneself, the clarification or illustration of a point, the manifestation of power, the intention of outdoing one's partner's wit, and the manifestation of admiration or respect for the addressee or a third party.

- Certain functions show a marked tendency to be fulfilled by either spoken or written discourse: the manifestation of disbelief or distrust only presented occurrences within the spoken corpora. The same can be said about teasing and about the disruption of the prevailing turn-taking structure. These results are logical for the last function, since we can not speak of a turn-taking structure in the pieces of written discourse analysed here. The other two also present features which are more associated with spoken discourse; teasing and expressing disbelief are generally associated with conversation rather than with written discourse¹². On the other hand, complaint turned

¹² However, they are not impossible functions for written discourse. The idea of a writer who is teasing or who wants to express disbelief or distrust in a given person or idea by means of verbal irony does not seem unreasonable.

out to be a much more frequent function in written discourse than in spoken discourse. This has to do with the genre of the two written corpora with which I am working in this study: the newspaper articles are all instances of journalistic writing in which the authors write about a given topic or problem and give their point of view about it. In most cases, these authors' point of view is not very favourable, and, therefore, they use verbal irony to complain about the problem they are writing about. The BR corpus displays samples of argumentative, philosophical discourse intended to analyse certain social problems and to criticise those who create these problems. It is not strange, thus, to see that Russell frequently uses verbal irony in order to publicly complain about these problems.

I hope the research done in this chapter will have helped in the identification and recognition of the functions intended by ironic speakers/writers of English. It has been shown here how the pragmatic strategies (discussed in chapter 8) used in the expression of verbal irony are chosen in order to fulfil certain general and specific discourse functions which depend on the type of verbal irony used, as well as on the genre or type of discourse. It is also hoped that this chapter will have contributed to "paint a more complete picture" of the phenomenon of verbal irony and, consequently, to present another aspect of it that complements the other aspects studied in previous chapters.

The study of the functions of verbal irony herein

developed intends to complete and round out the whole study presented and carried out in this dissertation. The following chapter is, therefore, meant to present the general conclusions taken from this piece of research as a whole.

Chapter 10: CONCLUSIONS

<<A world without irony would have to be either an earthly paradise, where it could never arise for there would be nothing to provoke it, or else an earthly hell, where it was never allowed to show its face. Our world seems unlikely ever to become an earthly paradise. Do men really seek peace and liberty, as they tell us? Not at all, according to Miguel de Unamuno: "They look for peace in time of war -and for war in time of peace. They seek liberty under tyranny -and tyranny when they are free". [...]. On the other hand, the continued presence of irony must be a sign that neither is our world as yet an earthly hell.>>

D.J. Enright, *The Alluring Problem: An Essay on Irony*.

10.1 Aims of this chapter

This chapter has two main aims: Firstly, the summary and general conclusions of this study will be presented and discussed. This discussion will centre upon the acceptance or rejection of the thirteen Research Hypotheses (as well as on the Main Hypothesis) put forward in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Additionally, some suggestions for lines of further research on the topic of verbal irony will be made, based on the findings of this particular study.

10.2 Summarised results and general conclusions

The results of the present study provide answers to all the research questions put forward in the Introduction, as well as qualitative and quantitative data for the acceptance of the Main Hypothesis and the thirteen Research Hypotheses derived from it.

The analysis of the instances of ironic discourse made in the five different corpora (specified in 1.4.1) has shed new light on the issues investigated. The main points and conclusions of this analysis are detailed as follows:

* After analysing some classical/traditional approaches to the study of verbal irony (chapter 2), it was shown that, even though many of the examples in the corpora could be explained by means of the "opposite-proposition" (traditional) argument, many others could not. The existence of a non proposition-oriented type of verbal irony was detected. The survey in chapter 7 (undertaken in order to test Research Hypothesis n° 1 (7.2.1.1)) showed that the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented type of verbal irony was greater than that of the proposition-oriented one. The results were tested by means of the statistical Median Test (Appendix 4, R. Hypothesis n° 1), and the conclusion drawn from the test is that the hypothesis can be accepted: Not only is there a non proposition-oriented type of verbal irony, but also this type has a frequency of occurrence higher than that of

the proposition-oriented counterpart (76.07% vs. 23.93%). "To use the opposite proposition to the one intended" was, thus, accepted as one of several possible strategies ironic speakers have at their disposal. Undoubtedly, verbal irony has much to do with contradiction and oppositions, but these contradictions were not only identified at the proposition level. Sometimes the contradiction was identified at other levels, the illocutionary level of the speech act or the presupposition level, to name but two.

* In chapter 3, I stated that I considered it appropriate to locate this study within the framework of linguistic Pragmatics, since that was the approach I had adopted for my analysis. I analysed different pragmatic approaches to the study of verbal irony, presenting data which was partially in agreement with these approaches. For example, Grice's approach was discussed, and it was shown that, even though there are numerous examples where it can be said that the irony triggers the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer/s, there are others in which the implicature is no longer worked out because it has been "short-circuited" (Morgan, 1978), and, therefore, it is no longer cancellable. These cases were labelled as *conventionalised* instances of verbal irony, while those in agreement with Grice's theory, i.e., those which clearly triggered conversational implicatures, were called *conversational*. But the data in the corpora suggested a third type of irony within this context, the *implicature-free* type. The precise nature of the definition

stems from the fact that, contrary to Grice's argument, the interpretation of the irony did not result from conversational implicatures but from conventional implicatures. The quantitative analysis made on the basis of these data (7.2.2) showed that Grice's explanation applies in the majority of instances of verbal irony in the corpora (77.78%), but not in the remaining 22.22%. Hence my argument that Grice's theory (as well as the other theories discussed) is interesting and illuminating but incomplete. The results confirmed the existence of the three types of irony indicated above (Research Hypothesis n° 2): *Conversational* (77.78%), *Conventionalised* (4.56%), and *Implicature-free* (17.66%). The chi-squared test applied to these results showed that the differences among the three types of irony are significant in terms of frequency of occurrence. There is no doubt as to the predominance of the conversational type.

* The considerable number of examples of verbal irony found, in which it could be said that the irony was interpreted in terms of an opposition of speech acts (23.65% of the total), reaffirms the relevance of Research Hypothesis n° 3 (stating that irony can manifest itself at the level of the speech act). Haverkate's (1990) "speech act analysis of irony" was useful in the context of this discussion. The evidence of the corpus examples, however, led me to disagree with him in his statement about the impossibility of irony to be expressed through declarative (performative) speech acts. According to the results of the present analysis, all kinds of speech acts seem to be the proper

arena for ironic intentions if the conditions and the context are appropriate. The results of the statistical chi-squared test (carried out in order to see whether there were significant differences in the distribution of speech act-oriented irony in all the corpora) show that the frequency of occurrence of the speech act-oriented instances of ironic discourse is different for the spoken and the written corpora. Speech act-oriented verbal irony appears to be more frequent in spoken discourse than non-speech act-oriented irony.

* As regards Research Question and Hypothesis n° 4, the analysis made in this study showed that, even when there are a great number of ironic utterances that can be labelled as *echoic* (35.04% of the total), there are an even greater number of such utterances that can not (64.96%). Thus, to echo someone's thought, utterance or idea is considered in this study another of the possible strategies used by ironic speakers, but not as the only one. In this way, it can be said that Sperber & Wilson's *Echoic Theory of irony* is useful and points out one very remarkable aspect of the phenomenon in question, but it does not explain all its possible occurrences or manifestations. The results of the statistical chi-squared test applied to these data showed that *echoic* and *non-echoic* irony manifest themselves differently in the spoken and written corpora: *Echoic* irony appears to be more frequent in written discourse and, on the contrary, *non-echoic* irony appears to be more frequent in spoken discourse. The results of this test suggest that in spoken

discourse it is less necessary to echo any person's utterances or ideas to be ironic, since the hearer/s or audience have other tools (bodily movements, gestures, etc.) to interpret any intended irony, whereas the writer of ironic discourse may resort more to echoic verbal irony (a more "established" strategy) to ensure the correct interpretation on the part of his/her readers.

* Another of the arguments put forward against Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory of irony was that not all instances of ironic discourse convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer (Research Hypothesis n° 5). This argument is closely connected to another of the arguments put forward in this piece of work, namely, that there exists a Positive kind and a Neutral kind of irony (not only a Negative one). Examples of ironic discourse which cannot be labelled as exhibiting a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer were found in the different corpora analysed. The quantitative analysis of the three main types of irony identified show that the Negative type is by far the most common. The statistical Kruskal Wallis test yields the differences (in frequencies of occurrence) among the three types as significant differences; but the lower frequency of occurrence of the Positive and Neutral types of irony does not invalidate the hypothesis which supports their existence. Consequently, Research Hypothesis n° 5 can be accepted. The examples analysed indicate that ironic discourse not always conveys a derogatory attitude on the part of its user.

On the contrary, sometimes it conveys a praising, positive attitude, and some other times this attitude appears to be neutral, the intention of the speaker being simply to amuse by means of witticisms.

* In view of the results of the analysis, the answer to Research Question n° 6 is that *not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence*, as Clark & Gerrig (1984) argue. Again, among the instances of ironic discourse analysed, a considerable number could be labelled as instances of *pretence* (24.79%), but a greater number could not (75.21%), a fact that favours the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n° 6. The Chi-square results show that the superiority (in terms of frequency) of the non-pretence cases over the pretence ones is significant.

* Apart from analysing the mentioned theories, a brief discussion and analysis of the different theories of laughter and of S. Freud's interpretation of jokes and irony (1905) was made in chapter 4. This analysis shed light on the fact that most of the psychologic and psycholinguistic theories of irony show a clear influence from this previous study made by Freud (4.7.2.3).

* Research Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10 originated as a consequence of analysing the phenomenon of irony in the light of Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987). This theory proved to be very useful in the explanation of different aspects of verbal irony (as shown in chapter 5), but, once more, there were many points that, in my opinion, could be argued. Therefore, I tried to show that, contrary to Brown & Levinson's statement

(which is in agreement with Grice's), an ironic utterance can not only violate the Gricean Maxim of Quality but also any of the other three Maxims. It was also shown how a speaker may be ironic without flouting the Maxim of Quality, i.e., how a speaker may be ironic but nevertheless be telling the truth (or what he considers to be true). The quantitative analysis shows that there is a marked tendency among ironic speakers to violate the Quality Maxim, but the frequencies of occurrence of the violation of the Relevance and the Manner Maxim are also considerably high (see 7.2.2.1.1). Research Hypothesis n° 7 can therefore be accepted.

The next hypothesis (and question) in connection with Politeness Theory is also of relevance to a previous hypothesis, namely, n° 2. Since it was found that not all cases of verbal irony are conversational, that is, not all of them imply the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer/reader, it follows that, contrary to Brown & Levinson's argument, not all instances of verbal irony can be labelled as *off record*¹³. It was shown in 5.3 how ironic speakers/writers not only make use of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make their point. It was also shown that sometimes both on record and off record strategies may co-occur in an ironic utterance or contribution. Moreover, a speaker/writer can make different off record strategies co-occur in order to convey ironic meanings. Both were considered evidence in favour of the acceptance of

¹³ According to Brown & Levinson, all off record strategies violate one of the four Maxims (1987: 214).

Research Hypotheses n° 8 and 9. The statistical chi-squared test proved that the frequencies of occurrence of the on record and off record types of verbal irony are similar in all the corpora, the off record type having a greater frequency of occurrence than the on record type.

In the final part of chapter 5 (5.5), an answer to Research Question n° 10 was sought. Research question n° 10 concerned the influence of the sociological variables P, D and R on the use or non-use of verbal irony. No quantitative analysis was made here (for it was considered beyond the scope of this study), but the qualitative analysis based on the corpus data showed that these variables certainly affect the use of ironic discourse, although no permanent formula could be found. The values of these three variables changed for the different interlocutors, contexts and/or situations.

* Chapter 6 concentrated on a very specific type of strategy used by ironic speakers, namely, the use of prosodic features. A survey was undertaken to identify the most frequent prosodic features that accompany ironic utterances (and that constitute the so-called "ironic tone of voice"). In this part of the study, only the London Lund Corpus was used, as it was the only corpus on which prosodic features were marked. The results of this survey showed that there is no specific tone used exclusively for ironic utterances (which confirms part of Research Hypothesis n° 11). The Fall and the Fall-rise, however, are the most frequently used tones with 48.8% and 36% of

occurrences, respectively. Even though these two tones also proved to be the most frequent among non-ironic utterances (55.6% and 17%, respectively), the results of the Chi-square test show that the differences between ironic and non-ironic discourse, in terms of frequency of occurrence of the different tones, are significant. In other words, there is a significant difference in the frequency of use and distribution of the tones between ironic and non-ironic discourse (the Fall-rise is much more frequently used in ironic utterances than in non-ironic ones). But tone was not the only feature analysed in this survey. Other prosodic features, like *stress on key words*, *high pitch on key words*, *speaker's or hearer's strategic laughter*, and *strategic pauses or silence* were surveyed, and it was found that the first three of them occurred very frequently within ironic utterances. Strategic silence/pauses did not occur very frequently, but all these features seemed to be handled by speakers of English in different combinations as a powerful strategy to convey ironic meanings. The most frequent combinations found were the following:

- 1- Fall-rise + Stress on key words + High pitch on key words + laughter
- 2- Fall + Stress on k. w. + High pitch on k.w. + laughter
- 3- Fall + Stress on k. w. + High pitch on k.w.
- 4- Fall-rise + Stress on k.w. + High pitch on k.w.

On this basis, it seems reasonable to suggest that Research Hypothesis n° 11 can be accepted: "There is no specific tone used

exclusively for ironic utterances. Nevertheless, the frequency of use of the different tones within ironic discourse is different from the frequency of use of these tones in non-ironic discourse. Intonation and other prosodic features (such as pitch level, laughter, etc.) work together to create the so-called "ironic tone of voice", and the use of these features constitutes yet another of the possible strategies ironic speakers have at their disposal".

As could be observed in chapter 6, a very intricate network of relationships can be woven with these features, but their co-occurrence, though exhibiting certain tendencies, is neither totally predictable nor random.

I am conscious of the fact that not all possible prosodic features accompanying verbal irony were quantified and analysed in the survey. Cases of nasalisation or breathy voice for example, were not accounted for simply because these features were not marked in the corpus used.

Still, with respect to prosodic features, a final reflexion was made on the implicit presence of such features in written ironic discourse (6.5), from which it can be concluded that ironic writers generally provide their readers with clues as to how their writing should be read aloud. These clues may be the use of "graphic" elements, such as inverted commas, italisation or bold type, the use of non-core words or expressions, or the pointing out of some features of the context that can help the reader understand which word/s should be made prominent.

* The answer to Research Question n° 12 ("What are the strategies used by ironic speakers/writers?") is addressed all throughout this dissertation (little by little) until we reach chapter 8, whereupon all preceding information (discussing the different theories of irony) is organised and enlarged in the "proposal of a taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used by English speakers/writers in ironic discourse". Prior to this proposal, an attempt was made to define/characterise the concepts of **strategy** and, finally, of **verbal irony**. The latter characterisation pictured verbal irony as a super-strategy embracing many subsidiary pragmatic strategies used by speakers/writers to express meanings which are based on one or more of a group of oppositions such as spiritual/material, true/false, etc. (see 8.2 b). The subsidiary strategies were described, analysed and quantified for the three main types of irony (based on the attitude of the ironist), namely; Positive, Negative and Neutral. The strategies identified were the following:

A) For Negative irony:

- A1- Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance.
- A2- Use a proposition which is contrary to general belief, but not contrary to what you mean.
- A3- Use a proposition you consider to be true but which is opposite to the one considered true by the hearer.
- A4- Show in your utterance that you have interpreted your interlocutor's statement as having an opposite meaning.
- A5- Use formal language and affected or non-core vocabulary when it is not apparently required by the situation or context.
- A6- Use words or expressions that have a somewhat different (though not opposite) meaning from the one conveyed.

- A7- Use puns: Make the hearer retrieve two mental frames.
- A8- Use suffixes that indicate a certain degree of derision.
- A9- Change the name of somebody (nickname) or something deliberately.
- A10- Use contradictory speech acts.
- A11- Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea.
- A12- Pretend, simulate.
- A13- Use rhetorical questions.
- A14- Give unexpected answers.
- A15- Joke, be humorous.
- A16- Avoid the lower points of a criticism.
- A17- Give hints and/or association clues.
- A18- Use metaphors.
- A19- Use euphemisms for taboo topics.
- A20- Displace the hearer.
- A21- Say what something or somebody is not.
- A22- Be incomplete, use ellipsis.
- A23- Use tautologies.
- A24- Say less than required or expected, understate.
- A25- Overstate, exaggerate.
- A26- Append an unexpected afterthought or aftercomment to your or your interlocutor's utterance.
- A27- Handle both positive and Negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution.
- A28- Make use of inverted commas, bold type, italisation or punctuation marks to signal certain key terms or expressions in written discourse.
- A29- Make use of prosodic features.
- A30- Use conventionalised verbal irony.
- A31- Make use of implicature-free verbal irony.

B) For Positive irony:

- B1- Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance.
- B2- Say less than required, understate.
- B3- Make use of conventionalised ironic terms or expressions.
- B4- Joke.
- B5- Use contradictory speech acts.
- B6- Insult the hearer.
- B7- Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea.
- B8- Other (open).

C) For Neutral irony:

- C1- Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your utterance or contribution.
- C2- Joke.
- C3- Hedge.
- C4- Exaggerate, overstate.

-
- C5- Use rethorical questions.
 - C6- Use contradictory speech acts.
 - C7- Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution.
 - C8- Use implicature-free verbal irony.
 - C9- Echo somebody's utterance, thought or idea.
 - C10- Use inverted commas, italics, etc..
 - C11- Use non-core vocabulary.
 - C12- Other (open).

The quantitative analysis showed that, the sub-strategies most frequently used within Negative verbal irony (which, as was anticipated, proved to be the type of irony with the highest frequency of occurrence) are, from most frequent to least frequent, A11, A12, A1, A10, A31, and A16. Furthermore, a study of the combinations of these strategies was made, the six most frequent being:

- 1- A1 + A11 + A12
- 2- A17
- 3- A1 + A11
- 4- A1 / A16 / A30
- 5- A10 + A13
- 6- A1 + A10 + A11 + A12.

The figures showed that, even though strategies which reflect the approaches in all the theories discussed have high frequencies of occurrence ("Use the opposite proposition", "Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea" or "Pretend"), none of them covers the totality of occurrences of the phenomenon, not even half of it. Other strategies, like "Using contradictory speech acts" or "Using the conventional implicatures of the words uttered" also proved to be very frequent practices among ironic speakers.

Regarding Positive and Neutral irony, no definitive conclusions can be made with respect to the tendencies of speakers to use or to combine the different strategies, given the

low percentage of occurrence of their substrategies in the corpora studied in this piece of research.

The chi-squared Test (Appendix 4, Hypothesis nº 12) was applied in order to test whether the distribution of the different substrategies differs for the five corpora used. The results of the test confirmed what had been expected, i.e., that these differences are significant, at least for the strategies used within Negative irony. No reliable results can be presented for the Neutral and the Positive type, considering the low number of cases identified. Therefore, it can be stated that, for negative irony, the variable of *discourse type* may affect the strategy chosen by the speaker or writer.

In view of the analysis made and the taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers proposed in this thesis, it seems reasonable to conclude that Research Hypothesis nº 12 can be accepted: <<Verbal irony is a super-strategy which is subdivided in three main kinds (Positive, Negative and Neutral), which in turn can be carried out by using different pragmatic substrategies such as "joke", "use the opposite proposition to the one intended", "use a different speech act from the one intended", "echo someone's previous utterance or thought", etc.>>.

* The final Research Question (nº 13: "What are the functions of verbal irony?") was answered in chapter 9. In this chapter, it was noted that, even though Jakobson's (1960), Halliday's (1976, 1978) or Brown & Yule's (1983) classifications of the

functions of language were insightful, none of them seemed to be specific enough to describe all the phenomena I observed in the instances of ironic discourse analysed. Therefore, I created my own categories, these being influenced to a certain extent by McCarthy and Carter's (1994) and by Norrick's (1993) categories. The functions proposed are classified on two main levels:

- a) at a more general level, it was found that all instances of verbal irony fulfilled one or more of the following three main functions: 1) VERBAL ATTACK, 2) AMUSEMENT and 3) EVALUATION;
- b) at a more specific level, the functions identified were the following: 1- TOPIC CLOSURE, 2- TOPIC CONCLUSION, 3- TOPIC SHIFT, 4- TOPIC COMMENT, 5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION, 6- RAPPORT BUILDING (Creation of solidarity among the participants of discourse), 7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK, 8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF, 9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT, 10- MANIFESTATION OF POWER, 12- TEASING (Poking fun at one's interlocutor), 13- COMPLAINT, 14- REPROACH, 15- DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE, 16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE, and 17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY.

All these functions were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively in the different corpora. The results of the latter analysis showed that the general function of EVALUATION has the highest frequency of occurrence. As explained in detail in 9.5, if, in the two corpora containing episodes of television

programmes (GG and YM), the functions taken into account were those intended by their authors for the programmes in their entirety, AMUSEMENT turned out to be more frequent than VERBAL ATTACK. If, on the contrary, the functions taken into account were those intended by the characters in each of the episodes, the function of VERBAL ATTACK was predominant.

Some correlations were found between these three general functions and the type of irony used (Negative, Positive or Neutral), and between these functions and the type of strategies chosen by the ironic speaker (these correlations are illustrated in Figures 9k and 9l in chapter 9). Accordingly, it was concluded that: a) within the Negative type of verbal irony, the three main functions may be fulfilled, b) when a speaker/writer uses Positive irony s/he may fulfil the general functions of EVALUATION and AMUSEMENT but not of VERBAL ATTACK; and c) when a speaker/writer uses Neutral irony the only possible general function to be fulfilled is that of AMUSEMENT.

As regards the seventeen specific functions, the most important in terms of frequency of occurrence were TOPIC CLOSURE, TOPIC CONCLUSION and TOPIC COMMENT. COMPLAINT, TEASING and REPROACH follow in importance.

It was observed that certain functions showed a marked tendency to be fulfilled by either spoken or written discourse. Thus, MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST, TEASING and DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE only presented occurrences within the spoken corpora. Conversely, COMPLAINT

showed a very high frequency of occurrence in the two written corpora. It was also noticed that these tendencies have to do with the genre or discourse type used in the different corpora used for the analysis. In effect, the results of the chi-squared test showed that the frequencies of occurrence of the different general and specific functions of verbal irony are different for the different discourse types analysed (Research Hypothesis n° 13, Appendix 4). Thus, the discourse functions of verbal irony can be said to depend upon two main factors: a) the type of irony used (Positive, Negative and Neutral) and, therefore, the attitude of the speaker; and b) the type of discourse used.

I believe the analysis of verbal irony made in this study is a rather thorough and complete one. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates that the phenomenon in question can be characterised in terms of the pragmatic strategies and discourse functions used by the speakers or users of the language. This approach intends to provide a more complete picture of the topic than that provided by previous theoretical analyses. For this reason, and in view of the results obtained after testing the thirteen Research Hypotheses, it seems reasonable to accept the Main Hypothesis presented in the introductory chapter:

<<Verbal irony is a complex phenomenon, which cannot be explained in its totality by means of the existing theories. Its very essence lies in paradox and contradiction (which may be present at different levels); and the pragmatic concept of strategy, as well as the concept of discourse function, can help in its explanation and characterisation.>>

Although there are no magical answers to the questions that such a complex phenomenon poses, an earnest attempt has been made to satisfy the objectives specified in section 1.3 of this thesis. The original contributions intended for this piece of research have materialised in the following parts of this study:

- a) Taxonomy of types of verbal irony based on different theories (Chapter 7);
- b) Taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers (Chapter 8);
- c) Inventory of general and specific discourse functions of verbal irony (Chapter 9);
- d) Qualitative pragmatic analysis of all the instances of verbal irony found in the corpora, and quantitative analysis of frequencies related to the above taxonomies, as well as to the prosodic features that accompany verbal irony (Chapters 2-9).

In spite of the length of this dissertation, there is still much to be investigated and learnt about verbal irony. It is still a promising land to be conquered. I shall now proceed to suggest what parts of this land can be visited in the future.

10.3 Suggestions for further research

Any piece of research can be expanded and perfected. In this particular study of verbal irony, I believe there are some aspects that could be perfected, some that could be expanded, and some that were not touched on but could and should be touched on in the future. I refer to the following:

- The typology (chapter 7) and taxonomies (chapters 8 and 9) proposed here could be enlarged and "polished" by means of the analysis of corpora other than the five corpora used in this study. It seems reasonable to suppose that the study of new and different discourse types would shed light on new and different types, pragmatic strategies or discourse functions of verbal irony, and that this would, in turn, bring new perspectives on the topic.
- A more detailed study of the possibilities of combination of the different pragmatic strategies and discourse functions studied here could also throw valuable light on the tendencies of the subject under study.
- It would also be fruitful to dispose of a corpus where all the prosodic features were marked, in order to be able to investigate all the variables of this kind which accompany ironic utterances. As was specified in chapter 6, the corpus used in this study for the analysis of prosodic features (LLC) gave no indication of such features as nasalisation or breathy voice (which, according to Tannen (1984), can be irony markers).
- Scope exists for a more detailed and careful analysis of the influence of the sociological variables P, D and R (chapter 5, 5.5). This paper comprises a rather brief and largely qualitative analysis. In a more detailed analysis, more important and accurate correlations would perhaps be obtained between the strategies used and the sociological variables affecting them.

- The development of a computational model of verbal irony is a future objective of considerable importance. I believe the data and results obtained in this study may serve as a basis for a future modelling of the phenomenon. There has been an attempt by Littman & Mey (1991) to model *situational* irony, in which they propose the following question as a criterion for judging whether any proposed theory of irony is viable: "Could that theory be used as a basis for a computer program that reasons about irony? (1991: 131). Also, according to these authors, a computational theory must give a description of the following three tasks that is explicit enough for a computer to be programmed to perform them: 1) Distinguish irony from non-irony; 2) describe why a situation is ironic or not; and 3) generate descriptions of ironic situations. In the case of verbal irony, we should substitute the word *utterance* or *contribution* for *situations*. These tasks have been partially addressed in this study, yet the characterisation provided here falls way short of the one necessary for a computer model. The very essence of verbal irony makes it difficult for the researcher to obtain clear-cut definitions and differentiations. The door is open, however, to further and newer proposals.

10.4 Concluding remark

This study of verbal irony is in no way definitive nor

exhaustive. I am conscious of the fact that many questions remain unanswered, and that, in spite of my attempts to characterise the phenomenon, it continues to be a mystery in many respects. But this is why, in my opinion, it is also fascinating. Irony is not only a topic of linguistic interest; it is also a philosophical problem, because *life, in itself, is ironic*. To study irony, therefore, may be very rewarding, for it may help us discover -or at least caress for a brief period of time- some of the mysteries of life.

To conclude, I would like to quote D. J. Enright once more:

<<... Irony itself often ends with three dots. And at times begins its reverberations therewith.>>
(1988: 164).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1a: DATA BASE FOR SURVEY IN CHAPTER 6

Examples ↓	TONE				Stress	Pitch	Laughter	Silence
	Fall	Rise	Fallrise	Risefall				
1	x				x	x	x	
2				x	x	x		
3			x		x	x		
4	x				x	x		
5		x				x	x	
6	x				x		x	
7			x		x			
8	x				x	x	x	
9	x				x			
10			x		x	x	x	
11			x		x	x	x	
12				x	x		x	
13			x		x	x	x	
14				x	x	x	x	
15			x		x	x		
16	x				x	x		
17			x		x	x	x	
18			x		x	x	x	
19			x		x	x	x	
20	x				x	x	x	
21			x		x	x		
22		x			x	x	x	
23	x				x	x		
24	x				x	x	x	
25			x		x	x	x	
26		x			x			
27	x				x		x	
28			x		x		x	
29	x				x	x	x	
30			x		x	x		

Examples ↓	Fall	Rise	Fall rise	Rise fall	Stress	Pitch	Laughter	Silence
31			X		X	X	X	
32				X	X	X		
33				X	X	X		
34	X				X	X		
35	X				X			
36			X		X	X	X	
37			X		X			
38	X				X		X	
39			X					
40			X					
41	X				X	X		
42	X					X	X	
43		X			X		X	
44	X				X			
45	X				X	X		
46	X				X	X		
47	X				X	X	X	
48	X				X			
49	X				X	X	X	
50			X		X	X	X	
51	X				X	X	X	
52	X				X	X	X	
53			X			X	X	
54			X		X	X	X	
55	X				X	X	X	X
56	X				X	X	X	
57	X				X	X	X	
58				X	X		X	
59	X				X	X	X	
60	X				X	X	X	X

Examples	Fall	Rise	Fall rise	Rise fall	Stress	Pitch	Laughter	Silence
61	x					x		
62	x				x	x		
63	x					x	x	
64	x					x		
65		x				x		
66	x							
67			x		x	x	x	
68			x		x	x	x	
69			x		x	x	x	
70	x					x	x	
71		x				x		
72	x					x	x	
73		x				x		
74	x				x	x	x	
75			x		x	x	x	
76	x						x	
77			x					
78	x				x		x	
79	x				x	x		
80			x		x	x		
81			x		x			
82	x				x			
83			x		x	x		
84			x		x			
85	x					x	x	
86			x		x	x		x

APPENDIX 1bPOSSIBLE STATISTICAL COMBINATIONS OF THE PROSODIC FEATURES
STUDIED IN CHAPTER 6: ACCOUNT OF OCCURRENCES OF EACH COMBINATION
AND MOST FREQUENT COMBINATIONS FOUND IN THE IRONIC EXAMPLES
ANALYSED IN THE LLC1- TONE (only) Number of occurrences in the corpus

a) Fall	1
b) Rise	1
c) Fall-rise	3
d) Rise-fall	0

2- FALL + other prosodic features

a) Fall + Stress	5
b) Fall + Pitch	2
c) Fall + Laughter	1
d) Fall + Silence	0
e) Fall + Stress + Pitch	9
f) Fall + Stress + Laughter	4
g) Fall + Stress + Silence	0
h) Fall + Pitch + Laughter	5
i) Fall + Pitch + Silence	0
j) Fall + Laughter + Silence	0
k) Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter	13
l) Fall + Stress + Pitch + Silence	0
m) Fall + Stress + Laughter + Silence	0
n) Fall + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	0
o) Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	2

3- RISE + other prosodic features

a) Rise + Stress	1
b) Rise + Pitch	3
c) Rise + Laughter	0
d) Rise + Silence	0
e) Rise + Stress + Pitch	0
f) Rise + Stress + Laughter	1
g) Rise + Stress + Silence	0
h) Rise + Pitch + Laughter	1
i) Rise + Pitch + Silence	0

j) Rise + Laughter + Silence	0
k) Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter	1
l) Rise + Stress + Pitch + Silence	0
m) Rise + Stress + Laughter + Silence	0
n) Rise + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	0
o) Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	0

4- FALL-RISE + other prosodic features

a) FR + Stress	4
b) FR + Pitch	0
c) FR + Laughter	0
d) FR + Silence	0
e) FR + Stress + Pitch	6
f) FR + Stress + Laughter	1
g) FR + Stress + Silence	0
h) FR + Pitch + Laughter	1
i) FR + Pitch + Silence	0
j) FR + Laughter + Silence	0
k) FR + Stress + Pitch + Laughter	15
l) FR + Stress + Pitch + Silence	1
m) FR + Stress + Laughter + Silence	0
n) FR + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	0
o) FR + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	0

5- RISE-FALL + other prosodic features

a) RF + Stress	0
b) RF + Pitch	0
c) RF + Laughter	0
d) RF + Silence	0
e) RF + Stress + Pitch	3
f) RF + Stress + Laughter	2
g) RF + Stress + Silence	0
h) RF + Pitch + Laughter	0
i) RF + Pitch + silence	0
j) RF + Laughter + Silence	1
k) RF + Stress + Pitch + Laughter	1
l) RF + Stress + Pitch + Silence	0
m) RF + Stress + Laughter + Silence	0
n) RF + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	0
o) RF + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence	0

ORDINAL SCALE - COMBINATIONS FOUND (from most frequent to least frequent)

- 1- Fall-Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter
- 2- Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter
- 3- Fall + Stress + Pitch
- 4- Fall-rise + Stress + Pitch
- 5- Fall + Stress
- 6- Fall + Pitch + Laughter
- 7- Fall + Stress + Laughter
- 8- Fall-rise + Stress
- 9- Rise + Pitch
- 10- Fall-rise
- 11- Rise-fall + Stress + Pitch
- 12- Fall + Pitch
- 13- Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence
- 14- Rise-fall + Stress + Laughter
- 15- Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter
- 16- Rise + Pitch + Laughter
- 17- Rise + Stress + Laughter
- 18- Rise + Stress
- 19- Fall-rise + Stress + Pitch + Silence
- 20- Fall-rise + Pitch + Laughter
- 21- Fall-rise + Stress + Laughter
- 22- Fall + Laughter
- 23- Fall
- 24- Rise-fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter

APPENDIX 2a: DATA BASE FOR SURVEY IN CHAPTER 8 (STRATEGIES)

REFERENCES:

LLC: LONDON LUND CORPUS
 YH: "YES, MINISTER" CORPUS
 NA: CORPUS CONTAINING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
 GG: "THE GOLDEN GIRLS" CORPUS
 BR: "RUSSELL'S BEST" CORPUS

A: NEGATIVE IRONY STRATEGIES

A1: USE THE OPPOSITE PROPOSITION TO THE LITERAL ONE OF YOUR UTTERANCE
 A2: USE A PROPOSITION WHICH IS CONTRARY TO GENERAL BELIEF, BUT NOT CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU MEAN
 A3: USE A PROPOSITION YOU CONSIDER TO BE TRUE BUT WHICH IS OPPOSITE TO THE ONE CONSIDERED TO BE TRUE BY THE HEARER
 A4: SHOW IN YOUR UTTERANCE THAT YOU HAVE INTERPRETED YOUR INTERLOCUTOR'S STATEMENT AS HAVING AN OPPOSITE MEANING
 A5: USE FORMAL LANGUAGE AND AFFECTED VOCABULARY WHEN IT IS NOT APPARENTLY REQUIRED BY THE SITUATION OR CONTEXT
 A6: USE WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS THAT HAVE A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT (THOUGH NOT OPPOSITE) MEANING TO THE ONE CONVEYED
 A7: USE PUNS: MAKE THE HEARER RETRIEVE TWO MENTAL FRAMES - A8: USE SUPPLIES THAT INDICATE A CERTAIN DEGREE OF DERISION
 A9: CHANGE THE NAME OF SOMEBODY (NICKNAME) OR SOMETHING DELIBERATELY - A10: USE CONTRADICTORY SPEECH ACTS
 A11: ECHO SOMEONE'S THOUGHT, UTTERANCE OR IDEA - A12: PRETEND, SIMULATE - A13: USE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS
 A14: GIVE UNEXPECTED ANSWERS - A15: JOKE, BE HUMOROUS - A16: AVOID THE LOWER POINTS OF A CRITICISM
 A17: GIVE HINTS AND/OR ASSOCIATION CLUES - A18: USE METAPHORS - A19: USE EUPHEMISMS
 A20: DISPLACE THE HEARER - A21: SAY WHAT SOMETHING OR SOMEBODY IS NOT - A22: BE INCOMPLETE, USE ELLIPSIS
 A23: USE TAUTOLOGIES - A24: SAY LESS THAN REQUIRED OR EXPECTED, UNDERSTATE - A25: OVERSTATE, EXAGGERATE
 A26: APPEND AN UNEXPECTED AFTERTHOUGHT OR AFTERCOMMENT TO YOUR UTTERANCE OR TO THAT OF YOUR INTERLOCUTOR
 A27: HANDLE BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MEANINGS IN THE SAME UTTERANCE OR CONTRIBUTION
 A28: MAKE USE OF INVERTED COMMAS, BOLD TYPE, ITALIZATION, PUNCTUATION MARKS, ETC. TO SIGNAL CERTAIN KEY TERMS OR EXPRESSIONS IN WRITTEN DISCOURSE
 A29: MAKE USE OF SOME PROSODIC FEATURES SUCH AS STRESS, HIGH PITCH, INTONATION, LAUGHTER, PAUSES, ETC. (IN SPOKEN LANGUAGE)
 A30: USE CONVENTIONALISED VERBAL IRONY - A31: MAKE USE OF IMPLICATURE-FREE VERBAL IRONY

B: POSITIVE IRONY STRATEGIES

B1: USE THE OPPOSITE PROPOSITION TO THE LITERAL ONE OF YOUR UTTERANCE - B2: SAY LESS THAN REQUIRED, UNDERSTATE
 B3: MAKE USE OF CONVENTIONALISED IRONIC TERMS OR EXPRESSIONS - B4: JOKE
 B5: USE CONTRADICTORY SPEECH ACTS - B6: INSULT THE HEARER
 B7: ECHO SOMEONE'S THOUGHT, UTTERANCE OR IDEA - B8: OTHER

C: NEUTRAL IRONY STRATEGIES

C1: INCLUDE UNEXPECTED, ABSURD AND CONTRADICTORY ELEMENTS IN YOUR CONTRIBUTION OR UTTERANCE
 C2: JOKE C3: HEDGE C4: EXAGGERATE, OVERSTATE
 C5: USE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS C6: USE CONTRADICTORY SPEECH ACTS
 C7: HANDLE BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MEANINGS IN THE SAME UTTERANCE OR CONTRIBUTION
 C8: USE IMPLICATURE-FREE VERBAL IRONY C9: ECHO SOMEONE'S THOUGHT, UTTERANCE OR IDEA
 C10: USE INVERTED COMMAS, ITALICS, ETC. (IN WRITTEN IRONY) - C11: USE NON-CORE VOCABULARY - C12: OTHER.

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	STRATEGIES																														
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86									X															X				X				X

A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG

STRATEGIES

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E X A M P L E S	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG																														
	STRATEGIES																														
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A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG

STRATEGIES

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51							X				X													X	X	X					
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E X A M P L E S	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG																														
	STRATEGIES																														
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	STRATEGIES																														
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E X A M P L E S	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - YM																														
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26									X			X					X														
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A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - BR

STRATEGIES

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	STRATEGIES																															
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53																X					X											X
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79																	X						X								
80											X	X	X	X																	

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		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG								C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - GG											
		STRATEGIES								STRATEGIES											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
E	44																				
X	45																				
A	46																				
M	47																				
P	48																				
L	49																				
E	50																				
S	51																				
	52																				
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	71																				
	72																				
	73									X						X					
	74																				
	75																				
	76																				
	77																				
	78																				
	79																				
	80																				
	82																				
	83																				
	84																				

[illegible][illegible]

		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - YM								C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - YM											
		STRATEGIES								STRATEGIES											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
EXAMPLES	44																				
	45																				
	46																				
	47																				
	48																				
	49																				
	50																				
	51																				
	52																				
	53																				
	54																				
	55																				

[illegible][illegible]

		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY-BR								C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY-BR							
		STRATEGIES								STRATEGIES							
E X A M P L E S	43																
	44																
	45																
	46																

		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - NA							
		STRATEGIES							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
E	1								
X	2								
A	3								
M	4								
P	5								
L	6								
E	7								
S	8								
	9								
	10								
	11								
	12								
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	41								
	42								
	43								

[illegible]

		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - NA								C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - NA											
		STRATEGIES								STRATEGIES											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
EXAMPL ES	44																				
	45																				
	46																				
	47																				
	48																				
	49																				
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	62																				
	63																				
	64		X																		
	65																				
	66																				
	67																				
	68																				
	69															X	X				
	70																				
	71																				
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	77																				
	78																				
	79																				
	80																				

APPENDIX 2b: COMBINATIONS OF STRATEGIES FOUND IN THE CORPORA.
ACCOUNT OF THEIR NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES

A: NEGATIVE IRONY

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES (OUT OF 351)
A1	10
A1 + A5 + A10	1
A1 + A9 + A10 + A18 + A25	1
A1 + A10	5
A1 + A10 + A11	1
A1 + A10 + A11 + A12	8
A1 + A10 + A12	1
A1 + A11	11
A1 + A11 + A12	19
A1 + A11 + A12 + A27	2
A1 + A11 + A12 + A28	1
A1 + A11 + A16	1
A1 + A11 + A17	1
A1 + A11 + A24	1
A1 + A12	4
A1 + A12 + A13	2
A1 + A12 + A16	2
A1 + A12 + A30	1
A1 + A13	1
A1 + A16	3
A1 + A18	1
A1 + A27	1

COMBINATIONS	N ^o OF OCCURRENCES
A1 + A28	1
A1 + A30	2
A2	2
A3 + A10 + A13	1
A4 + A31	1
A5 + A10	1
A5 + A11 + A12	2
A5 + A11 + A12 + A17	1
A5 + A11 + A31	1
A5 + A12 + A31	1
A5 + A16	1
A5 + A25 + A31	1
A5 + A27	1
A6	1
A6 + A10 + A16	1
A6 + A11 + A16	1
A6 + A14	1
A6 + A16	3
A6 + A16 + A31	1
A6 + A24	1
A7 + A10	1
A7 + A10 + A13	1
A7 + A11 + A24 + A25 + A26	1
A7 + A12 + A15	1
A7 + A12 + A28	1

COMBINATIONS	N° OF OCCURRENCES
A7 + A16	1
A8 + A16 + A31	1
A9	1
A9 + A11+ A17	1
A9 + A11 + A27 + A31	1
A9 + A12	1
A10	6
A10 + A11 + A12	1
A10 + A11 + A12 + A13	2
A10 + A11 + A12 + A15	2
A10 + A11 + A12 + A15 + A31	1
A10 + A11 + A13	1
A10 + A11 + A15	1
A10 + A12	1
A10 + A12 + A16 + A26	1
A10 + A12 + A17 + A20	1
A10 + A12 + A25	1
A10 + A12 + A31	1
A10 + A13	9
A10 + A13 + A17	1
A10 + A13 + A18	1
A10 + A13 + A25	2
A10 + A15	1
A10 + A16	1
A10 + A16 + A21	1

COMBINATIONS	N ² OF OCCURRENCES
A10 + A16 + A31	1
A10 + A17	3
A10 + A24 + A27 + A31	1
A10 + A25	1
A11	6
A11 + A12	5
A11 + A12 + A13 + A14	1
A11 + A12 + A19	1
A11 + A12 + A25	2
A11 + A13	1
A11 + A14 + A24	1
A11 + A16	3
A11 + A16 + A24	1
A11 + A16 + A26	1
A11 + A16 + A28	1
A11 + A16 + A31	2
A11 + A17	2
A11 + A17 + A28	1
A11 + A18	1
A11 + A18 + A26	1
A11 + A24	1
A11 + A25	1
A11 + A26	1
A11 + A27 + A28	1
A11 + A28	5

COMBINATIONS	N° OF OCCURRENCES
A11 + A30	1
A11 + A31	4
A12	6
A12 + A13	1
A12 + A15	1
A12 + A15 + A25	1
A12 + A18	1
A12 + A25	1
A12 + A27	2
A12 + A28	3
A12 + A30	2
A12 + A31	2
A13 + A25 + A30	1
A13 + A26	1
A14	1
A15 + A17 + A26	1
A16	10
A16 + A21	1
A16 + A17 + A30	1
A16 + A18	1
A16 + A21 + A31	1
A16 + A24	3
A16 + A26 + A31	1
A16 + A31	1
A17	16

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
A17 + A21	1
A17 + A24	2
A17 + A26	2
A17 + A27	1
A17 + A31	2
A18	5
A18 + A25	1
A19	3
A20	1
A22 + A24	1
A22 + A26	1
A24	4
A24 + A26	3
A25	7
A25 + A26	1
A25 + A27	1
A26	4
A26 + A31	3
A27	4
A27 + A31	4
A30	10
A31	7

B: POSITIVE IRONY

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
B2	1
B2 + B4 + B5	1

C: NEUTRAL IRONY

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
C1 + C7	1
C1 + C7 + C8 + C9	1
C1 + C8	1
C2 + C3	1
C5 + C6	1
C7 + C8	1

MOST FREQUENT COMBINATIONS FOUND (FROM MOST TO LEAST FREQUENT)

COMBINATION	N° OF OCCURRENCES
-------------	-------------------

1- A1 + A11 + A12	19
2- A17	16
3- A1 + A11	11
4- A1	10
5- A16	10
6- A30	10
7- A10 + A13	9
8- A1 + A10 + A11 + A12	8
9- A25	7
10- A31	7
11- A10	6
12- A11	6
13- A11 + A12	5
14- A11 + A28	5
15- A18	5

APPENDIX 3: DATA BASE FOR SURVEY IN CHAPTER 9 (FUNCTIONS)

GENERAL FUNCTIONS

1- VERBAL ATTACK

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-10-11-13-15-17-18-19-20-22-23-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-35-36-39-40-41-42-43-44-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-61-62-64-65-66-67-68-71-72-73-79-80-82-84-85-86.
GG	1-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-19-20-21-23-24-26-27-28-29-31-32-33-34-35-36-38-39-40-41-42-43-46-47-48-49-50-51-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-67-68-69-70-71-72-77-80-81-82-83-84.
YM	1-3-4-5-6-9-10-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-25-26-27-28-29-33-37-38-40-41-43-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-54.
BR	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-45-46.
NA	1-5-6-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-18-19-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-80.

2) AMUSEMENT

A) *Considering the functions as intended by the authors of the episodes in GG and YM*

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	8-10-11-15-17-18-19-20-22-24-28-29-31-50-52-53-54-56-58-59-60-62-63-64-67-68-69-70-71-72-76-85.
GG	All (from 1 to 84)
YM	All (from 1 to 55)
BR	32-38.
NA	2-3-4-7-8-17-18-20-32-33-36-37-38-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-58-59-78.

B) Considering the functions as intended by the characters of the episodes in GG and YM

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	8-10-11-15-17-18-19-20-22-24-28-29-31-50-52-53-54-56-58-59-60-62-63-64-67-68-69-70-71-72-76-85.
GG	15-30-37-31-73-74-75.
YM	30.
BR	32-38.
NA	2-3-4-7-8-17-18-20-32-33-36-37-38-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-58-59-78.

3) EVALUATION

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86.
GG	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84.
YM	1-3-4-5-6-8-9-10-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55.
BR	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46.
NA	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80.

SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS

1- TOPIC CLOSURE

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	6-28-36-57-65-66.
GG	3-4-6-10-17-18-19-26-28-30-3133-34-40-46-47-48-53-55-56-59-61-64-65-66-67-71-76-77-81-82-83.
YM	1-3-5-6-8-9-10-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-20-21-22-23-24-27-35-36-37-41-44-46-51.
BR	1-2-3-4-7-8-9-11-13-15-16-17-18-21-22-25-28-30-32-33-37-39-40-41-43-45.
NA	1-3-5-8-11-15-18-22-24-35-39-42-50-54-55-60-62-68-70-74-77.

2) TOPIC CONCLUSION

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	19-23-26-27-32-33-47-48-49-55.
GG	7-18-20-38-39-41-45-49-50-51-58-60-61-69-71-80-83.
YM	4-7-8-9-11-19-20-25-48-53-55-
BR	4-7-8-11-12-13-14-21-22-23-25-27-28-29-30-31-33-34-35-37-38-39-40-41.
NA	4-5-7-11-21-35-39-49-51-64-67-68-71-78-80.

3) TOPIC SHIFT

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	12-24-34-58-86.
GG	none
YM	49
BR	none
NA	none

4) TOPIC COMMENT

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	none
GG	78-79-84.
YH	39-42-45-47-52-54.
BR	5-6-10-15-19-20-24-26-30-34-35-36-42-44-46.
NA	10-13-16-17-20-26-28-29-31-34-36-43-44-46-47-48-52-53-56-62-66-69-73-75-76-79.

5) TOPIC INTRODUCTION

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	none
GG	none
YH	31.
BR	none
NA	12-19-23-25-27-30-40-41-61-72.

6) RAPPORT BUILDING

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	1-4-5-9-12-16-61-63-81.
GG	none
YH	none
BR	none
NA	64.

7) GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	4-16-31-61.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	none
NA	2-9.

8) PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	14-38-74-81.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	32.
NA	none

9) CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	44-45-51.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	36.
NA	6-65.

10) MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	37-83.
GG	24-35
YH	13.
BR	none
NA	none

11) MANIFESTATION OF POWER

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	39-40-41-42-43.
GG	none
YH	none
BR	none
NA	none

12) TEASING

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	58-59-60-62.
GG	21-22-23-24-26-27-28-30-35-36-37-42-44-46-52-57-68-70.
YH	2-15-22.
BR	none
NA	none

13) COMPLAINT

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	75-77.
GG	2-54.
YM	none
BR	1-2-4-5-6-8-9-11-12-13-14-15-23-24-26-29-36-37-39-40-41-46.
NA	14-15-16-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-42-43-57-75-76-77.

14) REPROACH

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	7.
GG	4-10-12-29-32-45-72.
YM	3-25-26-28-29-38.
BR	5-6-12
NA	none

15) DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	63
GG	13-17-19-20-25-69-74.
YM	none
BR	none
NA	none

16) INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	none
GG	none
YM	31-32-34-37-40-43-50.
BR	none
NA	none

17) MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	1.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	none
NA	64

APPENDIX 4: STATISTICAL TESTS USED TO TEST THE DIFFERENT HYPOTHESES IN THIS STUDY

Research Hypothesis N° 1: When being ironic, a speaker/writer does not always mean the opposite of the proposition expressed by the literal meaning of his/her utterance. Even more, the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented (non p.o.) cases of verbal irony is greater than that of the proposition-oriented ones (p.o.).

Median test

Corpora (Number of occurrences)									
London Lund Corpus		Golden Girls		Yes Minister		Bertrand Russell		Newspaper Articles	
p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.
16	70	16	68	16	39	16	30	20	60

- Position of the median = $(N + 1)/2 = 5,5$
- Median = 25
- Number of occurrences over and under the median: 2x2 table

70-68-60-39-30-20-16-16-16-16

	p.o.	non - p.o.	row total
over the median	0 (2,5)	5 (2,5)	5
under the median	5 (2,5)	0 (2,5)	5
column total	5	5	10

Obtained $X^2 = 10 > \text{Table } X^2 = 6,635$ for $p = 0,01$ and $d.f. = 1$
 Where: p = significance level
 $d.f.$ = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

Research Hypothesis N° 2: Verbal irony can be conveyed not only through conversational implicature, but also through conventional implicature. There exists a type of irony that can be said to be "implicature-free" and one that can be said to be "conventionalised" (in which the implicature has been short-circuited).

Derived sub-hypothesis 2a: There are significant differences in the frequencies of occurrence of the conversational, conventionalised and implicature-free types of verbal irony.

Chi squared test

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row Total
Conversational	74,4 (77,74)	77,4 (77,74)	72,7 (77,74)	80,4 (77,74)	83,8 (77,74)	388,7
Conventionalised	0 (4,34)	15,5 (4,34)	1,8 (4,34)	4,4 (4,34)	0 (4,34)	21,7
Implicature free	25,6 (17,92)	7,1 (17,92)	25,5 (17,92)	15,2 (17,92)	16,2 (17,92)	89,6
Column total	100	100	100	100	100	500

Obtained $X^2 = 53,510 > \text{Table } X^2 = 20,090$ for $p = 0,01$
and d.f. = 8

Where: p = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (2a) is accepted

Research hypothesis N° 3: Verbal irony manifests itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech act, and it can even be manifested through declarative (performative) speech acts. There is, therefore, a speech act-oriented type of verbal irony.

Derived sub-hypothesis 3a: The frequency of occurrence of the speech act-oriented instances of ironic discourse is different for the spoken and written corpora. Speech act-oriented irony is more frequent in the spoken corpora than in the written one.

Chi squared test

	Spoken Corpora	Written Corpora	Row total
Speech act-oriented	68 (53,21)	15 (29,79)	83
Non speech act-oriented	157 (171,79)	111 (96,21)	268
Column total	225	126	351

Obtained $X^2 = 15.001 > X^2 = 6,635$ for $p = 0,01$ and $d.f. = 1$

Where: p = significance level
 $d.f.$ = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (3a) is accepted

Research hypothesis N° 4: Not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention or interpretation. There is an echoic and a non-echoic type of verbal irony. The frequency of occurrence of the echoic instances of ironic discourse is different for the spoken and written corpora. Echoic irony is more frequent in the written corpora and non echoic irony is more frequent in the spoken one.

Chi squared test

	Spoken corpora	Written corpora	Row total
Echoic	50 (78,8)	73 (44,2)	123
Non - echoic	175 (146,2)	53 (81,8)	228
Column total	225	126	351

Obtained $X^2 = 45,105 > \text{Table } X^2 = 6,681$ for $p = 0,01$
and d.f. = 1

Where: p = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

Research hypothesis N° 5: Not all instances of ironic discourse convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer. The Negative type of verbal irony does convey such an attitude, but there are also two other main kinds of irony, namely, Positive and Neutral, in which the attitude of the user of irony is not derogatory at all.

Derived sub-hypothesis 5a: There are significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of the Negative, Positive and Neutral kinds of irony, the Positive and Neutral kinds being much lower in frequency than the negative one.

Kruskal - Wallis test

Corpora	Kinds of irony					
	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	N° of occ.	Range (Ri)	N° of occ.	Range (Ri)	N° of occ.	Range (Ri)
London Lund Corpus	1	6	84	15	1	6
Golden Girls	0	2	83	14	1	6
Yes Minister	0	2	50	12	5	10
Bertrand Russell	0	2	45	11	1	6
Newspaper Articles	1	6	77	13	2	9

Obtained $H = 11,180 > \text{Table } X^2 = 9,210$ for $p = 0,01$ and $d.f. = 2$
 Where: p = significance level
 $d.f.$ = degrees of freedom

$$H = \frac{12}{N} (N+1) \left[\frac{(\sum R_i)^2}{n} \right] - 3 (N + 1)$$

N = total number of cases
 n = number of cases in each sample

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (5a) is accepted

Research hypothesis N° 6: Not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence. Even more, the frequency of occurrence of the non-pretence instances of verbal irony is higher than the frequency of occurrence of the pretence ones.

Chi squared test

Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)						
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row total
Pretence	12 (21,3)	15 (20,08)	22 (13,6)	14 (11,4)	24 (19,8)	87
Non pretence	74 (64,7)	69 (63,2)	33 (41,4)	32 (34,6)	56 (60,2)	264
Column total	86	84	55	46	80	351

Obtained $X^2 = 16,412 > \text{Table } X^2 = 13,277$ for $p = 0,01$ and $d.f. = 4$

Where: p = significance level
 $d.f.$ = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

Research hypothesis N° 8: An ironic speaker/writer can make use not only of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make his point. The frequencies of occurrence of the on record and off record strategies of verbal irony are similar in all of the corpora, the off record ones being higher than the on-record ones.

Chi squared test

Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)						
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row total
On record	22 (19,1)	19 (18,7)	15 (12,2)	9 (10,2)	13 (17,8)	78
Off record	64 (66,9)	65 (65,3)	40 (42,8)	37 (35,8)	67 (62,2)	273
Column total	86	84	55	46	80	351

Obtained $X^2 = 3,244 > X^2 \text{ Tables} = 9,488$ for $p = 0,01$
and d.f. = 4

Where: p = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

Research hypothesis N° 11: The frequency of use of the different tones within ironic discourse is different from the frequency of use of these tones within non-ironic discourse.

Chi squared test

	Tones (Observed and expected frequencies)					
	Fall-rise	Rise	Fall	Rise-fall	Level	Row Total
Irony utterances	48,8 (52,7)	8,2 (12,95)	36 (27)	7 (5)	0 (2,35)	100
Non-ironic utterances	56,6 (52,7)	17,7 (12,95)	18 (27)	3 (5)	4,7 (2,35)	100
Column total	105,4	25,9	54	10	4,7	200

Obtained $X^2 = 16,362 > \text{Table } X^2 = 13,277$ for $p = 0,01$
and $d.f. = 4$

Where: p = significance level
 $d.f.$ = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

Research hypothesis N° 12: Verbal irony is a super-strategy which is subdivided in three main kinds (Positive, Negative and Neutral), which in turn can be carried out by using different pragmatic sub-strategies such as "joke", "use the opposite proposition to the one intended", "use a different speech act from the one intended", "echo someone's previous utterance or thought", etc.

Derived sub-hypothesis 12a: There are significant differences in the frequencies of occurrence of the 31 substrategies of Negative irony in the different corpora studied.

Application of the Chi squared-test to table 8.7. (p.446-7):

Obtained $\chi^2 = 286,76 > \text{table } \chi^2 = 154,51$ for $p = 0,01$ and $d.f. = 116$

Where:

$$\chi^2 = \sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$$

f_o = observed frequencies
 f_e = expected frequencies
 p = significance level
 $d.f.$ = degrees of freedom = $(30-1)(5-1) = 116$

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted.

Note: In performed calculations, all the cells with small expected values have an observed frequency very similar to the expected, and they contribute relatively little to the value of the χ^2 . It is unlikely that the value of the χ^2 has been seriously distorted, and the result of the test can be accepted.

(*) In the case of Positive and Neutral irony, the statistical analysis does not make sense because the number of occurrences of each of the substrategies in the different corpora is very small (≤ 2).

Research hypothesis N° 13: Speakers/writers of English use verbal irony in order to fulfill the main functions of EVALUATION, VERBAL ATTACK and /or AMUSEMENT. Other more specific functions may be fulfilled at the same time, such as TOPIC CLOSURE, TOPIC CONCLUSION, REPROACH, COMPLAINT, etc..

Derived sub-hypothesis 13a: The frequencies of occurrence of the different general functions of verbal irony are different for the different discourse types analysed.

Chi squared test (authors)

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row total
VERBAL ATTACK	72,09 (64,81)	0 (31,14)	0 (31,14)	95,65 (61,60)	87,50 (66,56)	255,24
AMUSEMENT	37,21 (68,64)	100 (32,98)	100 (32,98)	4,35 (65,24)	28,75 (70,49)	270,31
EVALUATION	98,84 (74,69)	0 (5,89)	0 (35,89)	97,83 (70,99)	97,50 (76,71)	294,17
Column total	208,14	100	100	197,83	213,75	819,72

Obtained $X^2 = 552,5 > Tables X^2 = 20,090$ for $p = 0,01$
and d.f. = 84

Where: p = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (13a) is accepted

Chi squared test (characters)

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row Total
Verbal attack	72,09 (86,32)	77,38 (76,52)	67,27 (66,36)	95,65 (82,04)	87,50 (88,65)	399,89
Amusement	37,21 (17,37)	8,33 (15,40)	1,82 (13,35)	4,35 (16,51)	28,75 (17,84)	80,46
Evaluation	98,84 (104,45)	98,80 (92,59)	90,91 (80,29)	97,83 (99,28)	97,50 (107,27)	483,88
Column total	208,14	184,51	160,00	197,83	213,75	964,23

Obtained $X^2 = 552,5 > \text{Tables } X^2 = 20,090$ for $p = 0,01$
and d.f. = 84

Where: p = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (13a) is accepted

Derived sub-hypothesis 13b: The frequencies of occurrence of the different specific functions of verbal irony are different for the written and spoken corpora.

Kruskal - Wallis test

Corpora	CORPORA			
	Spoken		Written	
	N° of occ.	Range (Ri)	N° of occ.	Range (Ri)
1	65	34	47	33
2	38	29,5	39	31
3	6	21	0	3,5
4	9	24,5	41	32
5	1	9	10	26
6	9	24,5	1	9
7	4	17	2	12
8	4	17	1	9
9	3	14	3	14
10	5	19,5	0	3,5
11	5	19,5	0	3,5
12	25	28	0	3,5
13	4	17	38	29,5
14	14	27	3	14
15	8	23	0	3,5
16	7	22	0	3,5
17	1	9	1	9

Obtained $H = 3,99 > \text{Table } X^2 = 3,841$ for $p = 0,01$ and $d.f. = 1$
 Where: p = significance level
 $d.f.$ = degrees of freedom

$$H = \frac{12}{N} \frac{(N+1)}{n} \left[\frac{(\sum R_i)^2}{n} \right] - 3 (N + 1)$$

N = total number of cases

n = number of cases in each sample

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (13b) is accepted

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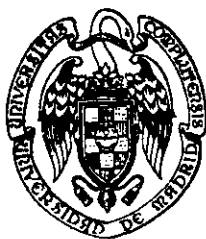
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ABRIR TOMO II





ABRIR TOMO I



UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

FACULTAD DE FILOLOGIA

DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGIA INGLESA



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UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE

**MEMORIA-RESUMEN EN CASTELLANO DE LA
TESIS DOCTORAL TITULADA:**

***THE FUNCTIONS AND STRATEGIES
OF IRONIC DISCOURSE: AN ANALYSIS***

**ANALISIS DE LAS FUNCIONES Y ESTRATEGIAS
DEL DISCURSO IRONICO**

presentada por: LAURA ALBA JUEZ



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ABREVIATURAS Y SIMBOLOS USADOS

LLC: LONDON LUND CORPUS

GG: CORPUS QUE CONTIENE EPISODIOS DEL PROGRAMA *THE GOLDEN GIRLS*.

YM: CORPUS QUE CONTIENE EPISODIOS DEL PROGRAMA *"YES, MINISTER"*.

BR: CORPUS CON LAS OBRAS DE BERTRAND RUSSELL.

NA: CORPUS QUE CONTIENE ARTICULOS DE PERIODICOS EN INGLES.

P: PODER (Variable sociológica)

D: DISTANCIA (Variable sociológica)

R: NIVEL DE IMPOSICION DE LA CULTURA PARTICULAR (Variable sociológica)

NOTACION EN EL *LONDON LUND CORPUS*

A) PROSODIA

Fin del grupo fónico ^Yes Comienzo del grupo fónico

TONOS:

Y\es DESCENDENTE Y\/es DESCENDENTE-ASCENDENTE Y=es SOSTENIDO

Y/es ASCENDENTE Y/\es ASCENDENTE-DESCENDENTE

INTENSIDAD:

:Yes Más alta que la de la sílaba anterior

!Yes Alta !!Yes Muy alta

ACENTUACION:

'Yes Normal "Yes Fuerte

PAUSAS:

Yes - - Cada guión constituye una unidad de pausa o "pié".

Yes + Pausa breve.

B) HABLANTES

A Identidad del hablante

(A) El hablante continúa donde dejó.

A, B A y B

VAR Varios hablantes

? Identidad desconocida del hablante

a (en letra minúscula) hablante no surrepticio

CAPITULO 1: INTRODUCCION

En este capítulo se remarca, primeramente, el carácter resbaladizo del concepto de ironía y, en consecuencia, la dificultad existente al querer definir tal concepto. Roy (1978) señala que la ironía versus la no ironía no implica una distinción binaria, sino más bien un continuo. Se hace referencia, además, a otros autores como Barbe (1995) o Kaufer (1981), quienes indican que el descubrimiento de la ironía conversacional se basa a veces en juicios muy personales, y que, por tanto, muchos prejuicios existen acerca de este concepto. Estos autores están de acuerdo en que las definiciones tradicionales y clásicas no muestran al fenómeno en su total complejidad (este punto se discute con más detalle en el capítulo 2).

El punto de vista adoptado en esta tesis trata de abarcar tantas ocurrencias del fenómeno en cuestión como sea posible, y en consecuencia no se atiene solamente a las definiciones tradicionales. Se trata aquí de encontrar datos y resultados más concretos en cuanto a los diferentes tipos de ironía verbal que un hablante pueda usar y entender, así como también en cuanto a la estrategias pragmáticas y las funciones discursivas que los usuarios de la ironía verbal en el idioma inglés tienen a su disposición.

Como la Pragmática y el Analisis del Discurso son por naturaleza multidisciplinarios, los marcos teóricos en los cuales se basa este estudio son variados y se interrelacionan entre sí. Así, tanto los enfoques clásicos como los enfoques psicológicos

y pragmáticos han resultado de utilidad como referencias para el análisis. Tanto el Principio de Cooperatividad de Grice (1975), como la Teoría de la Cortesía de Brown & Levinson (1978), la Teoría Ecóica de la Ironía de Sperber & Wilson (1981) y su posterior Teoría de la Relevancia (1986), la visión funcional del lenguaje de Jakobson (1960) o Halliday (1976, 1978, 1985), o el enfoque discursivo de Brown & Yule (1983) (entre otros enfoques), han resultado de utilidad para los diferentes análisis cualitativos y cuantitativos hechos en los distintos capítulos de esta tesis.

1.1 Preguntas e hipótesis de investigación

Las preguntas primarias y más generales son las siguientes:

¿Cómo se puede describir y explicar la ironía verbal?
¿Qué elementos de las teorías existentes y de los enfoques pragmático y discursivo pueden ayudar en la descripción y explicación del fenómeno?.

De ellas se derivó la siguiente hipótesis general:

La ironía verbal es un fenómeno complejo, que no se puede explicar en su totalidad por medio de las teorías existentes. Su esencia radica en la paradoja y la contradicción (la cual puede manifestarse en diferentes niveles), y el concepto pragmático de estrategia, así como el de función discursiva, pueden servir de ayuda en su explicación y caracterización.

En el curso de esta investigación, surgieron otras preguntas implícitas en las principales, de cada una de las cuales se derivó una hipótesis de investigación. Los análisis cualitativos y cuantitativos hechos en los diferentes capítulos de esta tesis tienen el objetivo de probar las diferentes hipótesis. En la

mayoría de los casos se hizo uso de ciertas pruebas estadísticas, según se especificará al nombrar cada hipótesis.

Las preguntas e hipótesis específicas son las siguientes:

Pregunta de investigación nº 1:

¿Quiere el usuario de la ironía verbal siempre significar la proposición contraria a la expresada por el significado literal de su emisión o contribución?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 1:

Cuando un hablante es irónico, no siempre quiere significar lo contrario de su proposición literal. Aún más, los casos en los que no lo hace (no proposicionales) son más frecuentes que aquellos en los que sí lo hace (casos proposicionales).

La prueba estadística de la Mediana se aplicará a los datos correspondientes para tener fundamentos sólidos para la aceptación o rechazo de esta hipótesis.

Pregunta de investigación nº 2:

¿Se puede expresar la ironía verbal a través de implicaturas convencionales? Dicho de otro modo, ¿Existe un tipo de ironía convencional o convencionalizada?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 2:

La ironía verbal se puede expresar no sólo a través de implicaturas conversacionales, sino también a través de implicaturas convencionales. Existe un tipo de ironía que podría llamarse "libre de implicaturas" (es decir, que no necesita de las implicaturas conversacionales), y otro tipo que puede denominarse "convencionalizado" (en el cual las implicaturas han hecho "corto circuito" (usando la expresión de Morgan, 1978)).

La prueba de la Chi-cuadrada se aplicará a los datos obtenidos al respecto, para ver si hay diferencias significativas en la frecuencia de ocurrencia de los tres tipos de ironía aquí

tratados (conversacional, convencionalizado y libre de implicaturas).

Pregunta de investigación nº 3:

¿Puede la ironía verbal manifestarse a través de el nivel ilocucionario del acto de habla, incluyendo los actos de habla del tipo declarativo?

Hipótesis de investigación nº3:

La ironía verbal puede manifestarse no sólo a nivel proposicional, sino también a nivel ilocucionario, y puede también ser expresada por medio de actos de habla del tipo declarativo. Existe, en consecuencia, una clase de ironía verbal que puede denominarse "ilocucionaria".

La prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada se efectuará de manera de poder aceptar o rechazar esta hipótesis, así como para poder comparar las frecuencias de ocurrencia de las variables "ilocucionaria" y "no-ilocucionaria" en los corpus hablados y escritos analizados en este estudio.

Pregunta de investigación nº 4:

¿Son todas las emisiones irónicas ejemplos de mención o interpretación ecóica?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 4:

No todas las emisiones irónicas son ejemplos de mención o interpretación ecóica. Hay una clase ecóica y una no ecóica de ironía verbal, y la frecuencia de ocurrencia de estas dos clases es diferente para los diferentes corpus analizados.

La prueba de la Chi-cuadrada se llevará a cabo para poder aceptar o rechazar esta hipótesis, así como para comparar las frecuencias de ocurrencia de las variables "ecóica" y "no-ecóica" en los

corpus escritos y hablados.

Pregunta de investigación nº 5:

¿Expresan o reflejan todos los casos de ironía verbal una actitud despreciativa o de crítica por parte del hablante?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 5:

No todos los casos de ironía verbal reflejan o expresan una actitud despreciativa o de crítica negativa por parte del hablante. La clase Negativa de ironía verbal sí lo hace, pero hay también otras dos clases principales, la Positiva y la Neutral, en las que la actitud del usuario de la ironía no es despreciativa en absoluto.

La prueba de Kruskal Wallis se aplicará a los datos para determinar si existen diferencias significativas en las frecuencias de ocurrencia de estas tres clases de ironía verbal (Positiva, Negativa y Neutral).

Pregunta de investigación nº 6:

¿Son todos los casos de ironía ejemplos de simulación?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 6:

No todos los casos de ironía verbal son ejemplos de simulación. Aún más, la frecuencia de ocurrencia de los casos de no simulación es mayor que aquella de los casos de simulación.

La prueba de la Chi-cuadrada se aplicará para la aceptación o rechazo de esta hipótesis.

Pregunta de investigación nº 7:

¿Pueden los usuarios de la ironía verbal violar todas las máximas del Principio de Cooperatividad de Grice?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 7:

El usuario de la ironía verbal puede violar todas las máximas del Principio de Cooperatividad de Grice (no sólo la de Calidad).

Pregunta de investigación nº 8:

Puede un hablante hacer uso de las estrategias "on record" (abiertas), además de las "off record" (encubiertas) (según descriptas por Brown y Levinson, 1978) para expresar su significado irónico?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 8:

Un hablante puede hacer uso no solo de las estrategias encubiertas (off record) sino también de las abiertas (on-record) para expresar significados irónicos. La frecuencia de ocurrencia de las primeras es mayor que la de las últimas, pero ello no niega la existencia de las últimas.

Se aplicará la prueba de la Chi-cuadrada a los datos para ver si las frecuencias de ocurrencia de estas dos variables (on record y off record) es similar o diferente para los distintos corpus analizados.

Pregunta de investigación nº 9:

¿Puede un hablante hacer uso simultáneo de diferentes estrategias encubiertas para expresar significados irónicos?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 9:

Un hablante puede hacer uso simultáneo de diferentes estrategias encubiertas para expresar significados irónicos.

Pregunta de investigación nº 10:

¿Ejercen las variables sociológicas P, D y R (*poder, distancia y rango de imposición de la cultura*) alguna influencia sobre el uso de la ironía verbal?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 10:

Las variables sociológicas P, D y R ejercen una cierta influencia sobre el uso de la ironía verbal.

Pregunta de investigación nº 11:

¿Hay algún tono específico (descendente, ascendente, etc.) que se use exclusivamente para las emisiones irónicas? ¿Qué otros rasgos prosódicos intervienen en el llamado "tono irónico de voz"?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 11:

No hay un tono específico que se use exclusivamente con las emisiones irónicas. Sin embargo, la frecuencia de uso de los diferentes tonos dentro del discurso irónico es diferente de la frecuencia de uso de dichos tonos en el discurso no irónico. La entonación y otros rasgos prosódicos (como el nivel de intensidad, la risa, la acentuación, etc.) trabajan conjuntamente para conformar el así llamado "tono de voz irónico", y el uso de estos rasgos constituye sólo una más de las posibles estrategias pragmáticas que los hablantes que expresan significados irónicos tienen a su disposición.

La prueba de la Chi-cuadrada se aplicará a los datos obtenidos para la comparación entre el discurso irónico y el no irónico.

Pregunta de investigación nº 12:

¿Cuáles son las estrategias usadas por los usuarios de la ironía verbal?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 12:

La ironía verbal es una super-estrategia que se subdivide en tres clases principales (Positiva, Negativa y Neutral), las cuales a su vez se manifiestan por medio del uso de sub-estrategias tales como "Hacer bromas", "Usar la proposición contraria a la significada", "Usar un acto de habla diferente al que se quiere manifestar", "Hacer eco del pensamiento, las ideas o las palabras de otra persona", etc..

Se llevará a cabo la prueba de la Chi-cuadrada para ver si

existen diferencias significativas en las frecuencias de ocurrencia de las diferentes estrategias en los diferentes corpus usados para el análisis.

Pregunta de investigación nº 13:

¿Cuáles son las funciones discursivas de la ironía verbal?

Hipótesis de investigación nº 13:

Los hablantes del inglés usan la ironía verbal para cumplir las funciones principales de EVALUACION, ATAQUE VERBAL y DIVERTIMIENTO. Otras funciones más específicas, tales como: "Cierre del tópico", "Conclusión del tópico", "Reproche", "Queja", etc., pueden ser cumplidas al mismo tiempo.

Las pruebas de la Chi-cuadrada y Kruskall Wallis se aplicarán a los datos numéricos obtenidos, con el objeto de saber si las frecuencias de ocurrencia de las funciones generales y específicas varían para los diferentes corpus utilizados.

Tanto las preguntas como las hipótesis de investigación están relacionadas con los objetivos de este estudio, los cuales enumero a continuación.

1.2 Objetivos de este estudio

El objetivo general de este estudio es hacer un análisis de la ironía verbal en el idioma inglés basado en cinco corpus diferentes de dicho idioma, de manera de poder identificar sus posibles maneras de ocurrencia, así como de poder clasificar las estrategias pragmáticas y las funciones discursivas usadas

por los hablantes que emplean el discurso irónico.

Los objetivos específicos son los siguientes:

A) Determinar:

- 1- si siempre ocurre que el usuario del discurso irónico quiere significar lo contrario de la proposición literal usada en su emisión;
- 2- si la ironía verbal se puede expresar también a través de implicaturas convencionales y no sólo a través de implicaturas conversacionales;
- 3- si la ironía verbal se puede expresar a través del nivel ilocucionario, y si es así, a través de qué tipos de actos ilocucionarios;
- 4- si todos los casos de ironía verbal son ejemplos de mención o interpretación ecóica;
- 5- si todos los casos de ironía verbal expresan una actitud despreciativa y de crítica por parte del hablante;
- 6- si todos los casos de ironía verbal son ejemplos de simulación;
- 7- si los usuarios de la ironía verbal pueden violar no sólo la Máxima de Calidad de Grice sino también las otras tres máximas (Cantidad, Relevancia y Modo);
- 8- si los usuarios del discurso irónico pueden hacer uso simultáneo de diferentes estrategias encubiertas (off record) para manifestar sus intenciones;
- 9- si las variables sociológicas P, D y R ejercen alguna influencia sobre el uso o no uso del discurso irónico;

10- si hay un tono específico característico de las emisiones irónicas; si las frecuencias de ocurrencia de los diferentes tonos son diferentes para el discurso irónico y el no irónico; y qué otros rasgos prosódicos pueden ocurrir simultáneamente con la entonación para producir el llamado "tono irónico de voz".

B) Crear:

- 1- una taxonomía o clasificación de las estrategias pragmáticas usadas por los anglo-hablantes que emplean la ironía verbal;
- 2- una tipología o clasificación de las funciones discursivas de la ironía verbal.

C) Hacer un análisis cuantitativo de :

- 1- la ocurrencia de los diferentes rasgos prosódicos y sus posibilidades de combinación;
- 2- las frecuencias de ocurrencia de los diferentes tipos de ironía resultantes del análisis del fenómeno a la luz de la diferentes teorías que tratan el problema;
- 3- las frecuencias de ocurrencia de las diferentes estrategias identificadas y clasificadas en los corpus analizados, así como tambien un análisis de sus posibilidades de combinación;
- 4- la ocurrencia de las diferentes funciones discursivas identificadas en los ejemplos de ironía verbal encontrados en los corpus.

1.3 Método de investigación y corpus usados

Los datos usados para el análisis se han extraído de cinco diferentes corpus del inglés: 1) el LONDON LUND CORPUS OF ENGLISH CONVERSATION, de Svartvik & Quirk (1980), 2) diez episodios de la serie televisiva titulada THE GOLDEN GIRLS, 3) siete episodios de la serie televisiva titulada "YES, MINISTER", 4) la prosa escrita de un libro titulado *Russell's Best*, que contiene extractos de las obras más importantes de Bertrand Russell, y 5) una colección de artículos de periódicos ingleses y norteamericanos.

El método de investigación puede decirse que se atiene a un paradigma mixto (Grotjalm 1987), ya que se hace tanto un estudio cuantitativo como cualitativo. Como se dijo arriba en relación con las hipótesis, en la mayoría de los casos se aplica alguna prueba estadística para la aceptación o rechazo de las hipótesis.

El análisis lingüístico llevado a cabo en toda la tesis es del tipo pragmático discursivo, y en consecuencia las variables estudiadas se interpretan desde esta perspectiva.

CAPITULO 2: FORMULACIONES CLASICAS DEL CONCEPTO DE IRONIA

En este capítulo se estudian algunas definiciones tradicionales de la ironía y se hace un recuento histórico de la evolución del concepto de manera general. El principal objetivo dentro del capítulo es demostrar, mediante ejemplos del corpus, que no todos los casos de ironía pueden enmarcarse dentro de las definiciones tradicionales, es decir, que no en todos los casos puede decirse que el hablante quiere expresar "la proposición contraria a la proposición literal" de su emisión. En consecuencia, los datos y el análisis presentados en este capítulo se tomarán como evidencia para la aceptación o el rechazo de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 1.

2.1 Algunas definiciones

Los hablantes que hacen uso de la ironía pueden querer significar diferentes cosas en situaciones y contextos diferentes. Por ello es difícil de definir, y no se conoce hasta el momento una definición que abarque al fenómeno en su totalidad.

Sócrates introdujo la ironía en el mundo al simular ignorancia frente a sus discípulos (circa 470-399 a.c.). Cicerón (106-43 a.c.) marcó el movimiento de característica de comportamiento a una figura retórica que critica a través del elogio o elogia a través de la crítica. Es importante recordar

la definición de Cicerón, pues si bien es tradicional, acepta que la ironía sirva también para expresar sentimientos o significados positivos o de elogio, cosa que muchos contemporáneos no aceptan. Samuel Johnson, en su *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) define a la ironía como: "A mode of speech of which the meaning is contrary to the words".

En general, todas las definiciones tradicionales coinciden en que una emisión es irónica siempre que su proposición sea falsa o no dicha con sinceridad. Sin embargo, como se verá más adelante, existen casos de ironía verbal en los que no se puede decir que el hablante no está diciendo la verdad; por el contrario, en muchas oportunidades quiere significar exactamente lo que dice literalmente, y sin embargo está siendo irónico. Por ejemplo, pensemos en un conductor que es insultado por otro conductor y luego dice: "I love people with good manners" ("Me encanta la gente educada"). Al primer conductor realmente le encanta la gente educada; no quiere decir que no le encante, sino que el segundo conductor no fue educado y, en consecuencia, el oyente deduce que al primer conductor no le gustó lo que hizo el segundo conductor. Pero, insisto, el primer conductor no quiso decir lo contrario de lo expresado por su proposición literal, ni está siendo falso en su apreciación.

2.2. Tipos de ironía

Diversos autores han clasificado y dividido a la ironía en diferentes tipos, tales como "la ironía del destino", "la

ironía dramática", etc. La clasificación que se ha tomado como más apropiada y útil para los fines de este estudio es la de Muecke (1969), quien distingue solamente entre *ironía verbal* e *ironía situacional*. La diferencia entre estas dos radica simplemente en una cuestión de intenciones: dentro de la ironía verbal la intención de ser irónico por parte del hablante es una condición necesaria, aunque no suficiente, mientras que la ironía de una situación o suceso irónicos no es intencional. La ironía verbal es una ironía para ser emitida, pronunciada. Por el contrario, la ironía situacional es básicamente una ironía para ser observada. Barbe (1993) clarifica la diferencia entre estos dos tipos de ironía cuando señala que la ironía verbal es *implícita* porque un hablante nunca especifica: "Voy a ser irónico al decir esto...". Por el contrario, la ironía situacional es *explícita* porque cuando hablamos de una situación irónica, generalmente decimos (o escribimos) cosas como: "Es irónico que..." o ¿No es irónico que me haya pasado esto?, etc.

Este estudio está básicamente centrado en la *ironía verbal*, es decir, todos los casos estudiados y analizados son de ironía implícita, aunque en algunos casos también se pueda observar una cierta ironía situacional subyacente.

2.3 Análisis

A continuación se presentan ejemplos del corpus, algunos de los cuales se pueden clasificar como prototípicos,

dado que se ajustan a las definiciones tradicionales, y otros de los cuales no se ajustan a dichas definiciones. Estos últimos se presentan como evidencia a favor de la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 1. En este resumen sólo mostraré un caso de cada uno.

[1] En el siguiente intercambio conversacional, tomado de el corpus *The Golden Girls*, Rose está preocupada por Blanche, quien podría tener que donar uno de sus riñones a su hermana:

Rose: I'm worried about Blanche. I wish she'd let one of us go with her.

Sophia: Not me. I hate hospitals. My friend Manny Fishbein went into the hospital a healthy guy. Then, boom-boom, dead. Just like that. In his sleep. Ninety-eight years old. No apparent cause.

Rose: I don't like hospitals either. They're full of germs. I always hold my breath in the elevators because there are sick people in the elevators and it's such a small space and once I had to go to the eighth floor of a hospital and the elevator stopped on every floor and I had to hold my breath all that time and I finally fainted and I hit my head and then I had to stay there because I had a concussion and I had to hold my breath all the way down in the elevator to the emergency room then I had to hold my breath in X-ray where they ask you to hold your breath anyway and...

(Dorothy enters)

Dorothy: I have great news.

Sophia: Rose, you'll excuse me. We'll get back to your fascinating hospital story later.

(GG, 1991: 54-5)

Después de la aburrida historia contada por Rose sobre por qué no le gustan los hospitales, el comentario de Sophia es claramente irónico en el sentido tradicional: la historia no le parece fascinante para nada. Sophia quiere decir lo contrario de lo que expresa con su proposición: no volverán a preguntarle sobre su historia en los hospitales porque no le parece fascinante en absoluto.

En el próximo ejemplo, sin embargo, no podemos decir que el hablante expresa lo contrario del sentido literal de su proposición. Este ejemplo ha sido extraído del corpus "Yes, Minister". En él, James Hacker está muy nervioso porque está esperando un llamado telefónico del Primer Ministro para confirmar su posición como Ministro del Gabinete británico. Su consejero político, Frank Weisel, viene a su casa para contarle las noticias sobre los ministros que ya han sido nombrados:

[2]

Weisel: Did you know Martin's got the Foreign Office?
Jack's got Health and Fred's got Energy.

Esposa de
Hacker: Has anyone got brains?

(YM, Episodio de video (1994): "Open Government")

La pregunta hecha por la esposa de Hacker tiene evidentemente un tono irónico. En repetidas ocasiones ella muestra estar descontenta de convertirse en la esposa de un ministro, y por lo tanto se mofa de toda la seriedad que la situación pueda tener. El significado de esta pregunta irónica no puede considerarse como contrario a su significado literal; en realidad, aquí el comentario irónico está hecho mediante una pregunta que no puede tildarse ni de verdadera ni de falsa. Este es uno de los casos que no pueden explicarse a la luz de los enfoques tradicionales. El análisis hecho en este estudio ve a este caso como un ejemplo de una de las estrategias pragmáticas más comunes (ver capítulo 8) usadas para expresar significados irónicos: el uso de preguntas retóricas.

Después del análisis se concluye que, si bien hay ejemplos que podrían llamarse "prototípicos", hay muchos otros en los que no cabe la explicación de la "proposición contraria" o la "falsedad", por lo tanto se considera al hecho de expresar la proposición contraria tan solo como una más de las posibles estrategias pragmáticas usadas para expresar significados irónicos (los datos cuantitativos al respecto se presentan en el capítulo 7).

CAPITULO 3: LA IRONIA COMO UN ELEMENTO DENTRO DE LOS FENOMENOS PRAGMATICOS

En este capítulo se sitúa a la ironía como un tema importante a ser estudiado dentro del campo de la Pragmática, dado que elementos tales como el *contexto*, el *significado que va más allá del significado literal*, los *actos de habla*, las *implicaturas*, etc., son importantes componentes de dicha disciplina. Leech (1983) señala que el significado en Pragmática se define en relación con el hablante o usuario de la lengua y, por lo tanto, estaremos trabajando dentro del campo de tal disciplina si hacemos referencia a los siguientes aspectos de la situación de habla: a) hablantes/emisores y oyentes/receptores, b) el contexto de un enunciado, c) los objetivos de un enunciado, d) el enunciado como una forma de acto o actividad: un acto ilocucionario, y e) el enunciado como un producto de un acto verbal (1983: 13-14).

En este estudio se analiza el discurso irónico, y en consecuencia también se puede decir que está dentro del Análisis del discurso, en el sentido dado por autores como Brown & Yule (1983), Levinson (1983) o McCarthy & Carter (1994). El analista del discurso no se interesa demasiado por las relaciones formales existentes entre oraciones o proposiciones; más bien se interesa en lo que los hablantes hacen.

El punto de vista adoptado para el análisis en este trabajo es, por tanto, un punto de vista pragmático-discursivo, que se centra en textos hablados y escritos dentro de los

contextos culturales en los cuales la lengua en cuestión (en este caso, el inglés) opera.

3.1 La Teoría de la Implicatura de Grice

La gran contribución hecha por Grice con el concepto de *implicatura conversacional* dio a los analistas del discurso una buena explicación para dar cuenta de cómo es posible "significar más de lo que realmente se dice", y obviamente, esto es básico para el estudio de la ironía. Según Grice, cuando un hablante es irónico está violando la Máxima de Calidad de su famoso Principio de Cooperatividad, y al así hacerlo el oyente supone que a pesar de ello el hablante quiere cooperar, por lo cual el oyente debe hacer una inferencia, es decir, debe elaborar una *implicatura conversacional*. A pesar del hecho irrefutable de que esta teoría trajo mucha luz al estudio de la ironía verbal, la visión de Grice no está lejos de la tradicional, pues sigue basando el uso de la ironía en condiciones de verdad o falsedad.

En el análisis hecho en este capítulo se trata de hacer notar que, si bien en muchos de los casos estudiados los hablantes violan la Máxima de Calidad, en muchos otros no hay tal violación de dicha máxima, sea por que la implicatura ha hecho "corto circuito" (según la terminología de Morgan, 1978) y por lo tanto ya no es cancelable, o porque no es necesario elaborar implicaturas conversacionales, pues la ironía se manifiesta a

través de implicaturas **convencionales** (no conversacionales). Así, encontramos casos de ironía **convencionalizada** en los que lo que se ha convencionalizado es la expresión o palabras usadas (por ejemplo, la expresión "A likely story", que en inglés siempre quiere decir lo contrario, es decir, "An unlikely story"). Pero hay otros casos en los que, a mi entender, lo que se ha convencionalizado es la **estrategia** usada y no la expresión o palabras en sí. Por ejemplo, si un hablante hace una pregunta y el oyente le contesta: "Is the Pope catholic?", el oyente querrá decir en forma irónica que la pregunta hecha por el hablante fue estúpida y sin sentido. En este caso, más que la expresión, lo que se ha convencionalizado es la estrategia, que se podría denominar de la siguiente manera: "Contesta a una pregunta estúpida con otra pregunta estúpida para hacer ver a tu interlocutor que la pregunta hecha por él no tiene sentido". Un caso similar es el siguiente, en el cual la estrategia sería: "Contesta a una pregunta estúpida con una respuesta ridícula, para hacer ver a tu interlocutor que su pregunta también fue ridícula":

[1]

Blanche: This is good. This is all food that would have spoiled.

(They start eating and eat throughout)

Dorothy: I'm so glad that my date with Barry is tomorrow. The fat won't have time to show.

Rose: It won't?

Dorothy: No. It always takes a few days before it shows.

Rose: Where does it go in the meantime?

Dorothy: To Connecticut. How do I know where it goes?

(GG, 1991: 28)

En este ejemplo, la frase "To Connecticut" es la que lleva la implicatura (que ya ha hecho "corto-circuito") de que la pregunta hecha por Rose fue estúpida.

Este análisis presenta evidencias a favor de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 2, que argumenta que la ironía verbal no sólo puede ser interpretada a través de implicaturas conversacionales, sino también a través de implicaturas convencionales (sea porque la implicatura conversacional ya no es cancelable y se ha convencionalizado, o porque directamente se haga uso de implicaturas convencionales, sin necesidad de violar ninguna de las Máximas de Grice).

En el capítulo 7 se hablará más en detalle del tipo de ironía que depende de las implicaturas convencionales, el cual he denominado "Implicature-free", es decir, libre de implicaturas conversacionales, por lo que no se darán ejemplos aquí.

3.2 La ironía y los actos ilocucionarios

En las famosas conferencias que fueron luego publicadas con el título de *How to do things with words* (1962), Austin demolió el punto de vista que situaba a las condiciones de verdad como elementos centrales para el entendimiento del lenguaje. Su Teoría de los actos de habla pasó a ser uno de los principales intereses de la teoría pragmática general. Dentro del marco del

estudio de la ironía verbal, la clase más interesante de actos de habla sería la que Searle (1976) denominó "Actos de habla indirectos", en los cuales el significado de la emisión del hablante y el significado de la oración se apartan de modos variados. Así, encontramos que, en muchos casos, el discurso irónico no presenta una oposición de proposiciones, sino una oposición de actos de habla, es decir, el acto aparentemente realizado es distinto del acto que el hablante intenta expresar. Haverkate (1990) da el siguiente ejemplo, en el que el acto explícito es una pregunta y el implícito un pedido (cargado de crítica o reproche): "Could you do me the favour of shutting up?" (1990: 85). Este ejemplo muestra una forma irónica de pedirle a alguien que se calle. En realidad, la pregunta es retórica, porque no espera respuesta alguna (ya se señaló anteriormente que las preguntas retóricas suelen ser estrategias frecuentemente usadas en el discurso irónico).

La ironía verbal se puede expresar a través de una amplia variedad de actos ilocucionarios, tal como señala Haverkate (1990), y, según se puede apreciar en el siguiente ejemplo del corpus, también se puede expresar por medio de actos declarativos (contrariamente a lo que opina Haverkate). Este hecho se toma como evidencia para aceptar parte de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 3:

<<The phone rang. I grabbed it. It was Frank Weisel, my political adviser, saying that he was on his way over. I told Annie, who wasn't pleased. "Why doesn't he just move in?", she asked bitterly. Sometimes I just don't understand her. I patiently explained to her that, as my political adviser, I depend on Frank more than anyone.

"Then why don't you marry him?" she asked. "I now pronounce you man and political adviser. Whom politics has joined let no wife put asunder.>>

(The Complete "Yes, Minister", 1989: 12)

En este ejemplo la esposa de Hacker hace uso de ironía ecóica reproduciendo el acto declarativo de "casar" a alguien. Ella trata de ridiculizar la mutua dependencia existente entre Hacker y su consejero político, y para ello reemplaza las palabras normales que usaría un sacerdote al casar a una pareja por otras palabras "claves" que le dan el sentido irónico a su emisión. Así, el acto explícito sería un acto declarativo, pero el implícito o encubierto es del tipo asertivo, pues lo que la hablante quiere aquí decir sería algo así como: "Estoy cansada de que vosotros dos estéis juntos todo el tiempo y, en consecuencia, de no tener tiempo para que mi marido y yo vivamos una vida normal y privada".

Así, el análisis de la ironía dentro de la Teoría de los actos ilocucionarios o actos de habla nos permite observar que la ironía verbal puede manifestarse también a nivel ilocucionario, y no sólo a nivel proposicional, tal como se expresa en la Hipótesis de investigación nº 3; y que además lo puede hacer a través de cualquier clase de actos de habla, aún de los actos declarativos (tal como se vio en el anterior ejemplo). El análisis en este capítulo es de carácter cualitativo; la contraparte cuantitativa para la aceptación de la Hipótesis nº 3 se hace en el capítulo 7.

CAPITULO 4: LA IRONIA COMO UN FENOMENO PSIQUICO Y PSICOLINGUISTICO

En este capítulo se analizan algunas teorías de la ironía que tienen relación con enfoques psicológicos. Dichas teorías son: la Teoría de la Mención Ecóica de Sperber y Wilson (1981), la Teoría de la Simulación de Clark y Gerrig (1984), la Teoría de la Relevancia de Sperber y Wilson (1986) y la Teoría del Recuerdo Ecóico de Kreuz y Glucksberg (1989). También se analiza la ironía en relación con el humor, y en consecuencia se discuten ciertas teorías de la risa, y finalmente el punto de vista adoptado por Sigmund Freud en su obra *El Chiste y su Relación con el Inconsciente* (1905).

Todas las teorías analizadas señalan alguna característica importante de la ironía verbal, pero ninguna de ellas parece cubrir todas las ocurrencias del fenómeno, y por ello es que, mediante algunos ejemplos de los corpus usados para este estudio, se argumenta a favor de un enfoque más completo, que no sólo tenga en cuenta los casos de eco, simulación, etc., sino también otros casos de ironía que aparentemente no cumplen los requisitos de tales teorías.

4.1 Teoría de la Mención Ecóica y Teoría de la Relevancia de Sperber y Wilson

Sperber y Wilson (1981) tratan de mostrar que hay una

condición necesaria para que una emisión sea irónica, y tal condición es que dicha emisión contenga la **mención** de una proposición, la cual debe hacer eco de alguna opinión que el hablante quiere caracterizar como inapropiada o irrelevante. Por ejemplo, si una persona invita a su amigo a dar una caminata argumentando que hace muy buen tiempo, y luego de salir comienza a llover, el amigo podrá después ser irónico haciendo eco de los argumentos de esa persona para salir a caminar diciendo: ¡Qué buen tiempo hace!.

En su posterior Teoría de la Relevancia (1986), la cual tiene que ver con la psicología cognitiva y el estudio del razonamiento, Sperber y Wilson modifican levemente su punto de vista de la ironía verbal al decir que todos los casos de ironía son casos de **interpretación ecóica**, pues ahora se dan cuenta de que la noción de "mención" no cubre todo el rango posible de casos que ellos proponen abarcar.

En el transcurso de esta investigación, se han encontrado ejemplos de ironía en los que no parece haber ninguna opinión o expresión mencionada previamente que se esté criticando o considerando inapropiada. Es verdad que Sperber y Wilson dicen que a veces la emisión irónica puede hacer eco de "los pensamientos de la gente en general" (1986: 238), pero entonces se podría argumentar que cualquier emisión puede ser ecóica, no sólo las irónicas. Así, se presentan en la tesis varios ejemplos de los corpus que pueden catalogarse de ecóicos, pero también se presentan los contraejemplos en los cuales , al menos desde mi

punto de vista, es muy difícil decir que el hablante o escritor está haciendo eco de algo (ver punto 4.3.1.1.2 en tesis en inglés). Se cre, por tanto, tener evidencia cualitativa a favor de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 4, que argumenta que no todos los casos de ironía son casos de mención o interpretación ecóica.

También en contra de lo dicho por Sperber y Wilson, se argumenta en este capítulo que no todos los casos de ironía verbal expresan una actitud de desprecio o crítica por parte del hablante, y se presentan ejemplos dados por otros autores, así como ejemplos de los corpus para demostrar que hay un tipo de ironía que justamente se usa para lo contrario, es decir, para elogiar o expresar sentimientos positivos hacia el oyente, y que hay otro tipo en el que no puede decirse que haya ninguna clase de actitud, ni positiva ni negativa, y que por tanto yo llamo *neutral*. Los ejemplos presentados parecen servir como evidencia para la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 5, en la cual se defiende la existencia de una ironía no agresiva o despreciativa, si bien se reconoce que la agresiva tiene una frecuencia de ocurrencia mayor (tal como se confirma con los datos cuantitativos en el capítulo 8).

4.2 Teoría de la Simulación de Clark y Gerrig

Clark y Gerrig argumentan que la teoría de Grice dice implícitamente que el hablante irónico *simula* usar una proposición para expresar la proposición contraria. La Teoría

de la simulación alude al significado etimológico de la palabra ironía, que viene del griego *eironeia*, y que quiere decir "ignorancia simulada intencionalmente".

El análisis de los corpus hecho en este estudio ha revelado que, si bien muchos casos de ironía verbal pueden catalogarse como casos en los que el hablante está simulando, también existen otros en los que tal aseveración sería difícil de poder hacerse. Así, tanto "el hacer eco de" como "la simulación" se consideran en este estudio como dos estrategias pragmáticas posibles y relativamente frecuentes para expresar significados irónicos, pero no como las únicas o las necesarias.

4.3 La ironía y el sarcasmo

Luego de analizar las diferencias entre distintos autores acerca de la relación entre la ironía y el sarcasmo, se concluye que el punto de vista adoptado en este estudio está de acuerdo con el de Holdcroft (1983), Leech (1980) o Barbe (1995), quienes consideran al sarcasmo como una clase de ironía; es decir que la relación existente entre ambos sería una relación de hiponimia, en la que la ironía es la clase general y el sarcasmo una clase subordinada.

4.4 La Teoría del Recuerdo Ecóico de Kreuz y Glucksberg

Kreuz y Glucksberg están de acuerdo con Sperber y

Wilson en cuanto al carácter ecóico de los enunciados irónicos, pero agregan que éstos siempre contienen un elemento de *recuerdo*. Dicho de otro modo, todas las emisiones irónicas aluden a sucesos o estados anteriores. Como con las otras teorías, la evidencia de los corpus nos dice que hay casos en los que esta teoría no es aplicable, considerando, además, que sus autores sostienen, al igual que Sperber y Wilson, que la ironía siempre es despreciativa y de crítica y que no hay ironía sin víctimas.

4.5 La ironía y el humor

La ironía verbal está íntimamente relacionada con el humor. La contradicción o "choque" que se expresa a través de ella, y muchas veces el tipo de agresión o de elogio sagaces que ella contiene, le da generalmente un efecto cómico o humorístico al discurso. La ironía como un mecanismo humorístico tiene mucho que ver con ciertos motivos psicológicos humanos. Así, al analizar las distintas teorías de la risa, podemos analizar también los motivos que llevan a los seres humanos a ser irónicos en ciertas oportunidades. Morreal (1983) presenta y discute estas teorías, que son las siguientes: 1) la "Teoría de la Superioridad", que sostiene que la risa es una expresión de un sentimiento de superioridad de una persona sobre otra u otras; 2) la "Teoría de la Incongruencia", que sostiene que la risa o el divertimento es una reacción a algo que se presenta como inesperado, ilógico o inapropiado; 3) la "Teoría del Alivio", que

presenta un punto de vista fisiológico, que ve a la risa como un mecanismo para aliviar la tensión y energía nerviosas, y 4) la teoría presentada por el mismo Morreal, que sostiene que la risa es el resultado de "un cambio psicológico gratificante". Si estudiamos cada una de las teorías, veremos que todas ellas dan cuenta de casos en los que la risa podría ser el resultado de una apreciación irónica.

4.6 La ironía y los chistes según Freud

En su famosa obra *El Chiste y su Relación con el Inconsciente* (1905), Freud da una interpretación a los chistes o bromas que resulta de gran interés para este estudio. Según Freud, los seres humanos siempre hemos tenido impulsos hostiles y agresivos, los cuales, junto con nuestros instintos sexuales, han sufrido restricciones y represión progresivas a lo largo de la historia. Así, esta hostilidad brutal ha sido reemplazada por la inventiva verbal, y por ello tienen su razón de ser los chistes o bromas.

Freud sólo hace mención a la ironía en dos ocasiones en su obra y la define dentro de una de las técnicas de los chistes, llamada "representación por lo opuesto". Obviamente, su visión de la ironía es bastante restringida, pero toda la obra está llena de chistes irónicos que muestran a la ironía trabajando a través de otras estrategias que no son siempre la representación por lo opuesto.

Es importante señalar que, en distintos puntos de la

obra de Freud que nos ocupa, podemos encontrar elementos que nos recuerdan las teorías psicolingüísticas analizadas en este capítulo anteriormente, por lo que se puede concluir que la teoría de Freud fue un importante antecedente y punto de referencia para todas estas teorías de la ironía. Muchos de los elementos que Freud ubica en los chistes están también presentes en el discurso irónico: economía de esfuerzo físico, simulación, recuerdo, etc.; y las técnicas de los chistes que él describe podrían considerarse también técnicas usadas por los usuarios de la ironía verbal.

Así, en este capítulo se ha visto a la ironía desde el punto de vista psicológico y psicolingüístico. En el próximo capítulo se verá al fenómeno desde un enfoque sociolingüístico.

CAPITULO 5: LA IRONIA EN EL MARCO DE LA TEORIA DE LA CORTESIA

Este capítulo tiene como fin discutir y analizar el lugar que la ironía verbal tiene dentro de la Teoría de la Cortesía de Brown y Levinson (1987 [1978]), para luego presentar ejemplos de los corpus que rebaten algunos de los conceptos o ideas defendidos por estos autores en dicha teoría.

Brown y Levinson ubican a la ironía como una subestrategia de la estrategia de cortesía nº 4 ("off record"). Según estos autores, todas las estrategias off record o encubiertas violan una de las cuatro máximas del Principio de Cooperatividad de Grice. La ironía como estrategia está dentro de las que violan la Máxima de Calidad. Este es el primer punto de esta teoría que se discute aquí: los ejemplos de discurso irónico analizados en el corpus permiten observar que en muchos casos los hablantes pueden violar alguna o algunas de las otras tres máximas, sin necesidad de violar la Máxima de Calidad. Este es el argumento principal de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 7, a favor de la cual se considera haber encontrado evidencia suficiente luego de analizar ejemplos como el siguiente, en el cual Humphrey no coopera con Bernard al violar la Máxima de Cantidad (y no la de Calidad), pues no es todo lo informativo que la situación requiere, sin dejar por ello de decir la verdad:

[1]

Bernard: What are we supposed to do about it?

Humphrey: Can you keep a secret?

Bernard: Of course!

Humphrey: So can I.

(YM, episodio de video, 1994: "Open Government")

Al decir "So can I", Humphrey está siendo sarcástico y diciéndole indirectamente a Bernard que no confía en él, y por lo tanto, a pesar de las expectativas de Bernard, Humphrey no va a contarle su secreto. Como se puede ver, este es uno de los casos de ironía en los que no puede decirse que el hablante no esté diciendo la verdad, por el contrario, Humphrey dice la verdad al comentar que él también puede guardar un secreto, pues no piensa contárselo a su interlocutor.

5.1 La ironía en relación con la Cortesía Positiva y la Negativa

Si bien la Cortesía Positiva y la Negativa son ubicadas por Brown y Levinson dentro de las estrategias "on record" (abiertas) y, por tanto, tendrían muy poco que ver con la ironía, en este estudio se argumenta que en casi todos los casos de ironía verbal el hablante apunta a la imagen positiva o negativa del oyente o de una tercera persona o situación, lo cual implicaría que este hablante no sólo está haciendo uso de las estrategias encubiertas sino también de las abiertas. Según el hablante tenga en cuenta la imagen positiva o negativa del oyente o tercera persona en cuestión, la ironía será también positiva o negativa. Un ejemplo que Brown y Levinson ponen dentro de las estrategias de Cortesía Positiva es el siguiente, el cual, según el análisis hecho en este estudio, es también un ejemplo de lo

que llamo Ironía Positiva:

[2] "How about lending me this old heap of junk? (H's new Cadillac)" (1987: 124).

Dado que los dos interlocutores son aquí amigos y que el coche en cuestión es un flamante Cadillac, el hecho de que el hablante le diga a su amigo que el coche es un montón de basura no solo debe interpretarse como una broma (que es la estrategia en cuestión ("Joke")), sino como una emisión irónica en la que se elogia al interlocutor a través de un aparente juicio negativo. Brown y Levinson no consideran a éste como un caso de ironía, lo cual es entendible considerando que la noción por ellos usada es la que reduce a la ironía verbal tan sólo a la violación de la Máxima de Calidad, y sólo para juicios negativos. Desde el punto de vista adoptado en este estudio, éste es un claro ejemplo de ironía positiva, y es, en consecuencia, uno de los casos que me inclinan a aceptar la Hipótesis de investigación nº 8, que argumenta a favor del uso de no sólo las estrategias encubiertas, sino también de las abiertas, para la expresión de emisiones irónicas.

5.2 La ironía y las otras estrategias encubiertas

En este apartado se trata de demostrar que las otras estrategias denominadas "off record" o encubiertas también pueden utilizarse para la expresión de significados irónicos. Estas estrategias se enumeran en el cuadro de "off record strategies" de la página 214 del libro de Brown y Levinson y en la página 200 de esta tesis en inglés. Se argumenta aquí, entonces, que

estrategias que según estos autores violan la Máxima de Relevancia, tales como "Presuponer" o "Dar pistas"; o las que violan la Máxima de Cantidad, tales como "Exagerar" o "Disminuir la importancia de algo"; o las que violan la Máxima de Modo, tales como "Ser vago", "Ser ambiguo" o "Sobregeneralizar", también son estrategias usadas para expresarse irónicamente. Así, se observa mediante variados ejemplos de los corpus que todas estas estrategias encubiertas pueden usarse con fines irónicos y que muchas de ellas pueden ocurrir simultáneamente, lo cual parece favorecer la Hipótesis de investigación nº 9.

5.3 La ironía y las variables sociológicas P, D y R

A continuación se hace un análisis o estimación de cómo o en qué medida las variables sociológicas descritas por Brown y Levinson pueden influir en el uso o no uso de la ironía verbal.

Si tomamos, por ejemplo, la variable D (distancia social entre el hablante y el oyente), se podría argumentar que en muchos casos en los que el hablante elige la estrategia de la ironía, lo hace porque existe una distancia social muy corta entre él y su interlocutor, sobre todo si se tiene en cuenta la apreciación de Sperber (1974), y también de Blakemore (1992) que dice que, al dejar su actitud implícita, el hablante irónico sugiere una relación de complicidad con su interlocutor. Sin embargo, también se observa en ejemplos de los corpus que en ciertos casos el hablante elige la ironía precisamente por lo

contrario, es decir, porque la distancia es grande y por lo tanto prefiere dejar ver sus intenciones o actitudes de una manera indirecta. Lo mismo ocurre con la variable P (poder relativo del hablante sobre su interlocutor o viceversa): hay casos en los que el hablante hace uso de la ironía porque tiene poder sobre su interlocutor, pero hay otros en los que la usa precisamente por lo contrario, como es el caso de Humphrey en la serie "Yes, Minister", quien en teoría tiene menos poder político que Hacker (el Ministro de Economía) y por tanto no puede tener un trato irrespetuoso hacia él, por lo que cada vez que quiere criticar sus opiniones o políticas desacertadas usa la ironía verbal. Con respecto a la tercera variable, R (nivel de imposición de la cultura en cuestión), se observa que existen ciertas situaciones en la vida diaria de cada cultura en las que la ironía parece ser más aceptada y esperada que en otras. Por ejemplo, en nuestra cultura occidental, no se esperaría de un profesor de gimnasia que fuera irónico al dar las instrucciones de cómo hacer un ejercicio, pero sí se espera discurso irónico por parte de los candidatos a la presidencia en su campaña política.

Finalmente se hace un análisis de varios ejemplos de los corpus con el fin de establecer en cada caso la fórmula en la que se combinan estas tres variables (ver 5.5.4 en tesis en inglés), pero se concluye que no parece haber una fórmula mágica, pues ésta depende de muchos factores y de otras variables que Brown y Levinson no discuten en su obra. Este análisis nos permite ver que las tres variables sociológicas definitivamente

tienen una influencia sobre el uso de la ironía como una estrategia pragmática, y por tanto puede considerarse a dicho análisis como evidencia a favor de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 10 (la cual sostiene que estas variables influyen en la elección de la ironía como estrategia).

CAPITULO 6: LA ENTONACION Y OTROS RASGOS PROSODICOS DENTRO DEL DISCURSO IRONICO: ANALISIS CUALITATIVO Y CUANTITATIVO

En este capítulo se presenta un estudio de la entonación y de otros rasgos prosódicos en relación con el fenómeno de la ironía verbal. En esta parte de la tesis se utilizó solamente el *London Lund Corpus* (Svartvik & Quirk, 1980), dado que es el único de los cinco corpus usados que tiene marcados los rasgos prosódicos, y considerando, además, que los textos y ejemplos analizados en dicho corpus eran suficientes para un análisis tanto cualitativo como cuantitativo.

Los objetivos generales de este particular análisis son: a) analizar de manera cualitativa y cuantitativa una de las variadas estrategias pragmáticas que los hablantes del inglés que quieren ser irónicos tienen a su disposición: el uso de rasgos prosódicos; b) determinar en qué medida una entonación particular o cualquier otro tipo de rasgo prosódico acompañan a los enunciados irónicos o afectan su posible interpretación.

La pregunta y la hipótesis de investigación son las que llevan el número 11 en el capítulo introductorio.

6.1 Metodología de la investigación

Datos: Los datos de fueron extraídos enteramente del *London Lund Corpus*, el cual consta de 87 textos con aproximadamente 500

palabras cada uno. De estos, veinte textos se eligieron de forma aleatoria para el análisis. Dentro de estos veinte textos se identificaron 86 ejemplos o casos de discurso irónico, todos los cuales se consideraron como variables del estudio.

Análisis e interpretación de los datos: * En el análisis del tono o tonos usados por los hablantes con sus emisiones o enunciados irónicos, el tono elegido para el conteo de frecuencias fue el tono del grupo fónico correspondiente a aquella parte del enunciado que llevaba la carga irónica más importante o relevante (debemos considerar aquí que, muchas veces, los enunciados irónicos contienen más de un grupo fónico).

* Las frecuencias de ocurrencia de los diferentes tonos usados con los enunciados irónicos se compararon a las obtenidas para los mismos tonos dentro del discurso no irónico en el mismo corpus. Con el objeto de saber si las diferencias entre las frecuencias medidas en ambos tipos de discurso (irónico y no irónico) es significativa, se aplicó la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada a los datos obtenidos.

* Como se observó que el tono no era el único rasgo prosódico que acompaña y da significado a los enunciados irónicos, se realizó también un análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo de los siguientes rasgos: 1- Acentuación, 2- Alta intensidad de la voz en palabras claves, 3- Risa, 4- Pausas o silencio.

* Finalmente, se hizo un estudio de las combinaciones de todos estos rasgos, con el objeto de determinar cuáles son las

combinaciones más frecuentes.

6.2 Ejemplos y resultados

En lo que se refiere al tono, se vio que no hay un tono exclusivo para los enunciados irónicos. Tanto los tonos descendentes como los ascendentes (así como combinaciones de ambos) ocurren en dichos enunciados, tal y como muestran los siguientes ejemplos:

- [1] (Tanto en [1] como en [2], los hablantes (dos académicos) están criticando y hablando irónicamente de las opiniones y puntos de vista del Director del Departamento sobre cómo debe enseñarse la Literatura)

A 11 but ^n\o#
A 11 ^you s\ee '[@:m]# .
A 11 [@] ^n\o#
A 12 ^this is ^this is the :l\ine#
A 11 to ^((s\ell))#
A 11 ^\obviously# *-
A 11 - . ^and he 'thinks that !\I kn/ow#
A 11 [?@] ^I'm . " !too 'much con:cerned
with :w\ords# - .
A 11 ^I'm !weak on aes:th\etic as he p/uts
it# (- - . giggles) which ^seems
to m/e# .
A 11 ^quite 'quite l\ooney#
A 11 I ^mean *the !fact* that 'you 'you -
:st\udy a 'thing#
A 11 ^d\oesn't mean to s/ay#
A 11 you ^can't also !!f\eel it#
B 11 *^[=m]#* .
A 11 ^d\oes it# .
B 11 ^[\m]# .
A 11 ^b\ut#
A 11 ^\anyway#
A 11 ^this is _his !l\ine#
A 11 and ^he's st\icking 'to it#
A 11 at the ^m\oment#
A 11 ^till he 'changes 'next :y\ear#
A 21 *(- laughs)*
B 20 *(- laughs)*

A 11 ^which I :gather is 'quite _
p\ossible#
A 12 I ^th\ink 'we you ^kn\ow [e:m]#
A 11 ^we 'have "f/ashions#

Svartvik & Quirk, LLC, (1980: S.1.6)

(DESCENDENTE-ASCENDENTE / ASCENDENTE-DESCENDENTE)

[2]

B 11 *((but . ^that !is only :n\atural#))*
A 11 a ^ra*ther 'weak ch\aracter#
A 11 ^d\oesn't it#
B 11 ^m\ay'be#
B 20 *((untranscribable murmur))*
A 11 *^not 'quite b\ig e'nough#
A 11 to ^go* and 'say l\ook old 'chap#
A 11 ^y\ou were r/right# -
A 11 or per^haps not _even _big e_nough _to .
A 11 r\ecog'nize#
B 11 I ^got the im:pr\ession#
B 11 that he ^didn't !r\ecog'nize it# .
A 11 ^n\o#
A 11 *^pr\obably**
B 12 *^that '[e:]([m]))* - he ^just di!g\ested the
B 12 'id/eas#
B 11 and ^then _came _out with _them _quite
B 11 spont_aneously and without re!fl\ection#
B 21 *((but it's a)) ^bit*
A 11 *^[\m]**
B 11 d\ifficult#
B 11 in a ^w\ay# -
B 11 that a ^person could be "!"s\o unre"fl/ective#
B 11 as ^not to _r\ealize#
B 11 that he'd ^ch\anged his m/ind# (laughs)

Svartvik & Quirk, LLC, (1980: S.1.6)

(DESCENDENTE-ASCENDENTE / ASCENDENTE-DESCENDENTE /
DESCENDENTE + ASCENDENTE)

- [3] (A usa la metáfora irónica "God Almighty" con un tono descendente (evidentemente A no quiere decir que el profesor del cual están hablando sea un Dios; por el contrario, A no está de acuerdo con su comportamiento)).

B 11 "G/\od _((damnation))# .
 B 11 I'll "cr\own that _bastard#
 B 11 *((be^fore I'm f\inished with him# -
 B 11 it ^used to be)) the "!s\ame {with the*
 ^ b/\oard#}#/

B 11 as ^w/\ell# .
 A 11 *(- laughs) . ((^oh n\o#
 A 11 I could ^see you sort of !s\eething#))*
 A 11 ^wh/at#
 B 11 the ^same at the b/\oard _meetings#
 B 11 *^t/\oo you* _know#
 B 21 I mean he ^takes over
 A 11 *((^y\es#))*
 B 11 *the :whole bloody (!!th=ing#))*
 A 13 *^he ^he ^he is* :really 'God al:m\ighty#
 A 11 he ^knows \everything# - -
 B 11 ((if)) ^I !don't cr\own ((the)) b/astard#
 A 11 (- laughs) -

Svartvik & Quirk, *LLC*, (1980: S.1.1)

(Ver Tablas 6.1 y 6.2, y Figuras 6a, 6b, 6d, 6e y 6f en tesis en inglés para la representación gráfica de las frecuencias de ocurrencia y para la comparación de los enunciados irónicos y los no irónicos)

* En lo que se refiere a los otros rasgos prosódicos (acentuación de palabras claves, intensidad de voz alta en palabras claves, risa y silencio/pausas), se vio que cualquiera de ellas puede ocurrir simultáneamente con la variable de tono. Algunas veces el enunciado irónico está marcado prosódicamente sólo por el tono, otras por el tono y uno ó dos rasgos prosódicos, y otras por todos los rasgos juntos. En los tres ejemplos de arriba observamos el uso de la acentuación y la intensidad en palabras claves, así como la risa por parte del hablante para indicar su intención irónica. El uso del silencio y las pausas estratégicas

no resultó ser un rasgo muy frecuente, aunque sí un rasgo posible y crucial en ciertos casos. Para la representación gráfica de los resultados al respecto, ver Tabla 6.2 y Figura 6c en tesis en inglés.

* El análisis cuantitativo dio los siguientes resultados:

a) Los tonos usados en el discurso irónico, en una escala de mayor a menor frecuencia, son los siguientes:

- 1- DESCENDENTE
- 2- DESCENDENTE-ASCENDENTE
- 3- ASCENDENTE
- 4- ASCENDENTE-DESCENDENTE
- 5- SOSTENIDO.

* El mismo orden de importancia fue hallado para los enunciados no irónicos; sin embargo, los resultados de la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada muestran que hay una diferencia significativa en la distribución de tonos en un tipo de discurso y otro. (Ver Apéndice 4, hipótesis 11 en tesis en inglés)

* Los rasgos prosódicos de acentuación, intensidad y risa presenten una alta frecuencia de ocurrencia. El silencio o pausas estratégicas no resultaron ser muy frecuentes. Todos estos rasgos parecen ser manejados por los hablantes de inglés usando diferentes combinaciones, como una poderosa estrategia para expresar significados irónicos. (Ver combinaciones más frecuentes en Apéndice 1b en tesis en inglés).

6.3 Conclusiones

* No existe un tono que se use exclusivamente para los enunciados

irónicos, y, además, el tono usado no es el único rasgo prosódico que determina el así llamado "tono irónico de voz". Otros rasgos prosódicos pueden co-ocurrir con la entonación para contribuir a la interpretación de los enunciados irónicos como tales.

* A pesar de que todos los tonos se pueden usar tanto en el discurso irónico como en el no irónico, la prueba estadística nos dice que hay una diferencia significativa en la distribución de los tonos en uno y otro. Efectivamente, el tono descendente-ascendente tiene una ocurrencia bastante mayor en el discurso irónico.

* Parece razonable sugerir que la co-ocurrencia de los rasgos estudiados no es totalmente predecible, pero tampoco es aleatoria. Varía dependiendo de la situación, los hablantes, etc..

* Los rasgos prosódicos constituyen una más de las estrategias que los hablantes irónicos tienen a su disposición. Se puede crear una variada y muy rica red de relaciones entre estos rasgos.

Finalmente se hace en este capítulo un breve análisis de la presencia implícita de los rasgos prosódicos en el discurso escrito. La conclusión general derivada de este análisis es que el escritor irónico generalmente da pistas a los lectores sobre cómo sus escritos deberían ser leídos en voz alta, sea por medios gráficos como las comillas, el uso de negritas o de letra cursiva, etc., por el uso de palabras o expresiones "no comunes"

o "no estándar" (non-core), o por medio de otros rasgos del contexto que puedan ayudar al lector a saber cuáles palabras deben hacerse prominentes.

CAPITULO 7: TIPOS DE IRONIA RESULTANTES DEL ANALISIS DE LOS DIFERENTES ENFOQUES VISTOS: ESTUDIO CUALITATIVO Y CUANTITATIVO

Este capítulo tiene dos objetivos principales: a) hacer una recapitulación de todos los tipos de ironía verbal que se han visto al analizar las diferentes teorías, proponiendo, en ciertos casos, nuevos tipos que han surgido como consecuencia de comprobar que tales teorías no cubrían la totalidad de los casos estudiados; y b) hacer un estudio cuantitativo de la frecuencia de ocurrencia de dichos tipos de ironía en los cinco corpus usados en esta investigación. Este estudio intenta obtener evidencia cuantitativa para la aceptación de las Hipótesis de investigación nº 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 y 9.

7.1 Tipos de ironía verbal surgidos del estudio de las diferentes teorías

- Del estudio de las teorías tradicionales o clásicas, se razonó que, si bien existen muchos casos de ironía verbal en los cuales puede decirse que el hablante quiere expresar la proposición contraria a la literal de su emisión, existen también otros muchos que no están orientados hacia la proposición. Por lo tanto podríamos decir que, desde este punto de vista, hay dos clases principales de ironía verbal: 1) **Proposicional** y 2) **No proposicional**.

- Al mirar el problema desde el punto de vista de la Teoría de la Implicatura de Grice, se concluyó, con base en los ejemplos

de los corpus, que la ironía verbal consiste en algo más que la violación de las Máximas. En muchos casos esta violación aparece, pero en otros no existe tal violación. Un hablante puede ser irónico sin violar las máximas, sea porque la implicatura ha "hecho corto-circuito" (y por lo tanto, la ironía se ha convencionalizado), o simplemente porque no hay nada que genere dichas implicaturas. En este último caso, la clave para la interpretación irónica está en las implicaturas convencionales. Así, desde esta perspectiva, encontramos tres tipos de ironía verbal: 1) Conversacional, 2) Convencionalizada y 3) Libre de implicaturas (conversacionales).

- Si se analiza a la ironía verbal desde el punto de vista de la Teoría de los Actos de Habla, se ve claramente que hay instancias en las que la ironía reside en una contradicción de actos ilocucionarios, pero que en otros casos el acto de habla no es la clave para la interpretación irónica. Por tanto, hablamos aquí de dos clases principales: 1) Ironía ilocucionaria y 2) ironía no ilocucionaria.

- Desde el punto de vista de la Teoría Ecóica de Sperber y Wilson, la evidencia de los datos nos dice que, si bien hay un gran número de casos de ironía que pueden tener un origen ecóico, hay otro gran número que no lo tiene. Por tanto, se puede hablar de dos tipos principales de ironía verbal: 1) Ecóica y 2) No ecóica.

- En lo que concierne a la Teoría de la Simulación de Clark y Gerrig, algunos de los casos estudiados resultaron ser casos de

simulación pero otros no. Por lo tanto, desde esta perspectiva, podemos hablar de dos clases principales: 1) **Simulada** y 2) **No simulada**.

- Finalmente, y con respecto a la Teoría de la Cortesía de Brown y Levinson, se comprobó que en ciertas ocasiones los enunciados irónicos se hacían, efectivamente y tal como dicen los autores, a través de actos amenazadores de la imagen encubiertos; pero en algunos casos estos actos eran de tipo abierto. En consecuencia, podemos decir que existen dos tipos principales de ironía verbal en relación con esta teoría. 1) **Encubierta** y 2) **Abierta**.

7.2 Resultados y conclusiones

Los datos numéricos recolectados de los análisis de los ejemplos de ironía verbal encontrados en los cinco corpus nos dicen lo siguiente:

- La frecuencia de ocurrencia de los casos de ironía no proposicionales es mayor que la de los proposicionales en todos los corpus, obteniéndose una frecuencia relativa total de 76.07% para los primeros y de 23.93% para los segundos. Las diferencias significativas existentes entre estos dos tipos de ironía se confirman con los resultados de la prueba estadística de la Mediana (ver representación gráfica de estos resultados en pág. 317 de la tesis en inglés, y prueba estadística en Apéndice 4, Hipótesis 1). Parece razonable concluir entonces que la Hipótesis de investigación n° 1 puede ser aceptada.

- Si bien el tipo conversacional de la ironía verbal obtuvo los porcentajes de ocurrencia más altos, los otros dos tipos (el convencionalizado y el libre de implicaturas) no deben ser dejados de lado, pues representan aproximadamente un cuarto del número total de ocurrencias. Las frecuencias totales relativas obtenidas son 77.78% para el tipo conversacional, 4.56% para el convencionalizado, y 17.66% para el libre de implicaturas (ver representación gráfica de estos resultados en pág. 329 de la tesis en inglés). Estos datos nos dan evidencia para la aceptación de las Hipótesis de investigación n° 2, 7 y 9. La prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada confirma las diferencias significativas que existen entre los tres tipos en lo que a frecuencias de ocurrencia se refiere (ver Apéndice 4, Hipótesis 2 en tesis en inglés).

- La frecuencia de ocurrencia del tipo ilocucionario de ironía verbal es menor que la del tipo no ilocucionario en los cinco corpus analizados, pero el porcentaje de casos ilocucionarios es mayor en los corpus hablados que en los escritos, tal como lo confirman los datos numéricos y la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada (ver Apéndice 4, Hipótesis 3 en tesis en inglés). En cualquier caso, la existencia de un tipo ilocucionario de ironía verbal ha probado ser real para un 23.65% del total de los ejemplos estudiados, obteniendo el tipo no ilocucionario el 76.35% restante (ver gráficos en pág. 343 de tesis en inglés), y ello presenta evidencia a favor de la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación n° 3.

- El número total de ejemplos no ecóicos en los corpus es mayor al número correspondiente a los ecóicos (228 y 123 respectivamente), lo cual favorece la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación n° 4 (ver representación gráfica de resultados en pág. 353 de tesis en inglés). La prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada (ver Apéndice 4, Hipótesis n° 4 en tesis en inglés) nos dice que las frecuencias de ocurrencia de estas dos variables varían para los corpus escritos y los hablados: la proporción de casos ecóicos de ironía verbal es mayor en los corpus escritos que en los hablados.
- La ironía no simulada resultó ser más frecuente que la simulada (75.21% contra 24.79% del total respectivamente), datos que, junto con los resultados de la prueba de la Chi-cuadrada (ver Apéndice 4, Hipótesis 6 de tesis en inglés), sirven como evidencia para la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación n° 6. (Estos resultados se pueden observar gráficamente representados en pág. 359 de tesis en inglés).
- La ironía encubierta obtuvo mayores porcentajes de ocurrencia que la ironía de tipo abierto en todos los corpus, como lo confirma, también, la prueba de la Chi-cuadrada (ver Apéndice 4, Hipótesis 8, y pág. 367 para representación gráfica en tesis en inglés). Pero el 22.22% de instancias de ironía abierta encontrado parece constituir una evidencia suficiente para la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación n° 8.

En conclusión, los datos obtenidos en el estudio

llevado a cabo en este capítulo parecen apoyar la idea defendida en esta tesis con respecto a la carencia de poder explicativo de las teorías existentes: todas ellas apuntan a una cierta característica de la ironía verbal, pero ninguna de ellas parece dar cuenta de todas las posibles ocurrencias del fenómeno.

CAPITULO 8: PROPUESTA DE UNA TAXONOMIA DE LAS ESTRATEGIAS
PRAGMATICAS USADAS POR LOS ANGLOHABLANTES EN EL
DISCURSO IRONICO: ANALISIS CUALITATIVO Y CUANTITATIVO

Este capítulo se centra en las diferentes estrategias pragmáticas de las que un hablante puede hacer uso cuando intenta producir un trozo de discurso de tipo irónico. El mensaje implícito en mi propuesta es que los rasgos enfatizados por los distintos autores vistos hasta el momento son todos rasgos de la ironía verbal que señalan una posible estrategia, pero que hay otros rasgos (no considerados por dichos autores), implícitos en otras estrategias, que también caracterizan a la ironía verbal, tal y como los ejemplos estudiados en los corpus parecen confirmar.

8.1 Definiciones

Antes de presentar la propuesta, se cita la definición de estrategia dada en un trabajo anterior (Alba Juez, 1995b), la cual vuelvo a citar aquí, pero traducida:

<<Un intento por parte de un hablante de alcanzar (por medio de variados procedimientos lingüísticos) un fin comunicativo dado.>> (1995b: 22).

Se trata también, finalmente, de definir el concepto que nos ocupa, es decir, la ironía verbal; pero dado que esto constituye un paso muy arriesgado (considerando el carácter tan versátil y resbaladizo de tal concepto), llamo a lo siguiente una

caracterización:

<<La ironía verbal es una super-estrategia que contiene muchas estrategias pragmáticas subsidiarias, usadas por los hablantes para expresar significados que están basados en una o más oposiciones de un grupo de oposiciones semánticas subyacentes tales como: campo material/espiritual, verdad/falsedad, positivo/negativo, amor/odio, uno mismo/los otros, etc.. Estas oposiciones se pueden hacer manifiestas en diferentes niveles, tales como el de la proposición, el acto ilocucionario o el nivel fonológico. Generalmente, la ironía verbal conlleva una actitud del hablante que muestra desprecio o crítica en la mayoría de los casos, pero también puede conllevar una actitud que expresa sentimientos positivos o que puede crear una cierta armonía entre los interlocutores, o también puede expresar una actitud de neutralidad del hablante, sin necesidad de crítica o elogio hacia el oyente, una tercera persona o una situación dada.>>

La clasificación y descripción de las subestrategias se ha hecho para cada uno de los tipos principales encontrados con respecto a la actitud del hablante, es decir, para los tipos *Negativo*, *Positivo* y *Neutral*.

8.2 Ironía Verbal Negativa: Sé agresivo contigo mismo, el oyente, una tercera persona o una situación dada

Todas las estrategias de ironía negativa llevan la letra A, y se detallan a continuación. (En este resumen sólo se hace una enumeración de dichas estrategias. Para el análisis de ejemplos ver tesis en inglés, capítulo 8).

- A1: Usa la proposición contraria a la proposición literal de tu enunciado.
- A2: Usa una proposición que expresa algo contrario a la creencia general, pero que no es contrario a lo que quieres decir.
- A3: Usa una proposición que consideras verdadera pero que es

contraria a lo considerado como verdadero por el oyente.

- A4: Muestra en tu enunciado que has interpretado el enunciado de tu interlocutor como si tuviera un significado contrario a lo dicho.
- A5: Usa lenguaje formal y vocabulario afectado cuando no es aparentemente requerido por la situación o contexto.
- A6: Usa palabras o expresiones que tienen un significado algo diferente (aunque no contrario) del que se quiere expresar.
- A7: Usa juegos de palabras: Haz que el oyente tenga que recurrir a dos marcos mentales.
- A8: Usa sufijos que indiquen un cierto grado de irrisión.
- A9: Cambia el nombre de alguien o algo deliberadamente.
- A10: Usa actos ilocucionarios contradictorios.
- A11: Haz eco de los pensamientos, palabras o ideas de alguna otra persona.
- A12: Simula.
- A13: Usa preguntas retóricas.
- A14: Da respuestas inesperadas.
- A15: Bromea, muestra que posees buen sentido del humor.
- A16: Evita recurrir a los niveles más bajos en una crítica.
- A17: Da pistas o claves para la asociación de significados.
- A18: Usa metáforas.
- A19: Usa eufemismos.
- A20: Desplaza al oyente.
- A21: Di lo que alguien o algo no es.
- A22: Usa enunciados incompletos, usa la elipsis.
- A23: Usa tautologías.
- A24: Dí menos de lo esperado o requerido.
- A25: Exagera.
- A26: Agrega un comentario inesperado a tu emisión o a la de tu interlocutor.
- A27: Juega con significados positivos y negativos en el mismo enunciado o contribución.
- A28: Haz uso de la comillas, la negrita, la letra cursiva, los signos de puntuación, etc., para señalar ciertos términos o expresiones claves en el discurso escrito.
- A29: Haz uso de rasgos prosódicos como la acentuación, la entonación, la intensidad alta, la risa, las pausas, etc. (en el discurso hablado).
- A30: Usa la ironía verbal convencionalizada.
- A31: Haz uso de la ironía verbal libre de implicaturas.

8.3: Ironía Verbal Positiva: Muestra sentimientos positivos (de elogio, admiración, etc.) hacia tí mismo, tu interlocutor, una tercera persona o una situación dada

Todas las estrategias de Ironía Positiva llevan la

letra B, y son las siguientes:

- B1: Usa la proposición contraria a la literal de tu emisión.
- B2: Dí menos de lo requerido o esperado.
- B3: Haz uso de términos o expresiones irónicos convencionalizados.
- B4: Bromea.
- B5: Usa actos ilocucionarios contradictorios.
- B6: Insulta a tu interlocutor.
- B7: Haz eco de los pensamientos, palabras o ideas de alguien.
- B8: Otras (posibles estrategias no encontradas en los corpus por contener pocos ejemplos de Ironía Positiva).

8.4: Ironía Verbal Neutral: Muestra ingenio en tu emisión para el divertimento de tus interlocutores, sin expresar actitud alguna, positiva o negativa, hacia ninguna persona o situación.

Todas las estrategias de Ironía Neutral llevan la letra C, y son las siguientes:

- C1: Incluye elementos absurdos, contradictorios o inesperados en tu contribución o enunciado.
- C2: Bromea.
- C3: Usa expresiones o palabras "mitigadoras" ("hedges").
- C4: Exagera.
- C5: Usa preguntas retóricas.
- C6: Usa actos ilocucionarios contradictorios.
- C7: Juega con significados positivos y negativos en el mismo enunciado o contribución.
- C8: Usa la ironía verbal libre de implicaturas.
- C9: Haz eco de las ideas, pensamientos o palabras de alguien.
- C10: Usa las comillas, la negrita, la letra cursiva, etc. (en la ironía verbal escrita).
- C11: Usa vocabulario no estándar o poco común.
- C12: Otras (estrategias posibles que no aparecen en los corpus estudiados).

8.5: Análisis cuantitativo y conclusiones

Los resultados del análisis cuantitativo hecho con

respecto a los tres tipos principales de ironía nos dicen que la Ironía Negativa es sin duda el tipo más frecuentemente usado por los usuarios del inglés, al menos en los cinco corpus utilizados. La frecuencia relativa obtenida para dicho tipo es de 96.58%, mientras que la de la Ironía Positiva es tan solo de 0.57% y la de la Ironía Neutral es de 2.85% (ver gráficos representativos en pág. 443 de la tesis en inglés). A pesar de la poca frecuencia de ocurrencia de estos dos últimos tipos, el mero hecho de que aparezcan algunos pocos ejemplos ya parece ser evidencia suficiente para aceptar la Hipótesis de investigación nº 5, la cual defiende el carácter positivo y neutral de ciertos casos de ironía verbal.

En lo concerniente a la frecuencia de ocurrencia de las subestrategias dentro de los tres tipos principales, los siguientes datos son notorios:

- Las estrategias más frecuentemente utilizadas por los usuarios de la Ironía Verbal Negativa son las siguientes:

A11: Haz eco de los pensamientos, palabras o ideas de otra persona; con 35.04% de ocurrencias.

A12: Simula; con una frecuencia relativa de 24.79%.

A1: Usa la proposición contraria a la literal de tu enunciado (23.13%).

A10: Usa actos ilocucionarios contradictorios (23.65%).

A31: Usa la ironía verbal libre de implicaturas (17.66%).

A16: Evita recurrir a los niveles más bajos en una crítica (17.38%).

Si bien en estas estrategias se ven reflejadas las Teorías más importantes (tales como la de la Simulación, la de la Mención ecóica o las tradicionales), ninguna de ellas cubre la totalidad

de casos estudiados; y también hay otras prácticas muy frecuentes, tales como el uso de actos ilocucionarios contradictorios o el recurrir a la implicaturas convencionales, que no se encuadran dentro de dichas teorías.

En cuanto a las subestrategias dentro de la Ironía Positiva y la Neutral, no se pueden dar datos confiables sobre las prácticas más frecuentes, dado el bajo número de casos encontrados. (ver tablas en págs. 448 y 449 en tesis en inglés). La representación gráfica de las frecuencias de ocurrencia de las subestrategias A, B y C se puede ver en pág. 451 de la tesis.

Se hace en este capítulo, además, un análisis de las combinaciones de dichas estrategias y se remarcan las más frecuentes encontradas en los cinco corpus (ver Apéndice 2b en la tesis).

Así, el análisis cuantitativo muestra ciertas tendencias de los hablantes a elegir algunas estrategias más que otras, y la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada (ver Apéndice 4, Hipótesis 12 de la tesis) nos dice que estas tendencias varían según el tipo de discurso usado, lo que implicaría que algunas estrategias son más apropiadas que otras para un tipo determinado de discurso o género.

Se cree, luego del presente análisis, haber encontrado evidencias suficientes para la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación n° 12 (sobre las estrategias de la ironía verbal) y para parte de la Hipótesis principal, que dice que la ironía verbal puede ser caracterizada por medio de la descripción de las

estrategias pragmáticas puestas en marcha por sus usuarios. También la Hipótesis principal afirma que dicha caracterización puede hacerse, además, con una descripción de las funciones discursivas que cumplen los enunciados irónicos. Ese es el tema del proximo capítulo.

CAPITULO 9: LAS FUNCIONES DISCURSIVAS DE LA IRONIA VERBAL:
ANALISIS CUALITATIVO Y CUANTITATIVO

El objetivo principal de este capítulo es analizar las instancias de discurso irónico encontradas en los diferentes corpus para identificar las funciones discursivas que la ironía verbal puede cumplir.

Primeramente se hace mención a ciertos intentos de clasificación de las funciones del lenguaje, tales como los de Jakobson (1960), Halliday (1976, 1978, 1985) o Brown y Yule (1983), pero, si bien estos enfoques son valiosos y arrojan luz sobre el problema, todos ellos trabajan con categorías demasiado abstractas para el análisis que se pretende hacer aquí. Al enfocar mi análisis en un corpus de lenguaje natural me ví forzada a pensar en términos de los rasgos observables de los ejemplos y de su contexto en concreto, y en consecuencia, fue necesario crear categorías más específicas. Mc Carthy & Carter (1994) trabajan dentro de lo que aquí llamo "un nivel más concreto de análisis", y por tanto algunas de sus categorías han sido útiles para el análisis hecho en este estudio. El estudio hecho por Norrick (1993) sobre las funciones de las bromas o chistes conversacionales también ha influido mi visión de las funciones del discurso irónico.

9.1 Funciones del discurso irónico

Dentro de un nivel más concreto y específico de análisis, se encontró que hay, a su vez, por lo menos dos niveles: uno más general, en el cual se identificaron tres funciones principales para la ironía verbal: 1) ATAQUE VERBAL, 2) DIVERTIMIENTO Y 3) EVALUACION; y otro más específico, en el cual se identificaron diecisiete categorías diferentes:

- 1) CIERRE DEL TOPICO (DE CONVERSACION)
- 2) CONCLUSION DEL TOPICO
- 3) CAMBIO DE TOPICO
- 4) COMENTARIO DEL TOPICO
- 5) INTRODUCCION DE UN TOPICO
- 6) CREACION DE SOLIDARIDAD ENTRE LOS PARTICIPANTES DEL DISCURSO
- 7) GENERACION DE DISCURSO IRONICO-HUMORISTICO ADICIONAL
- 8) PRESENTACION DE CIERTO SENTIDO DEL HUMOR ACERCA DE UNO MISMO
- 9) CLARIFICACION O ILUSTRACION DE UN PUNTO O TEMA
- 10) MANIFESTACION DE INCRECULIDAD O FALTA DE CONFIANZA
- 11) MANIFESTACION DE PODER
- 12) GASTAR BROMAS AL INTERLOCUTOR
- 13) QUEJA
- 14) REPROCHE
- 15) ROMPIMIENTO DE LA ESTRUCTURA DE TURNOS PREDOMINANTE
- 16) INTENCION DE PROBAR SER MAS LISTO/A QUE EL INTERLOCUTOR.
- 17) MANIFESTACION DE ADMIRACION Y RESPETO POR EL INTERLOCUTOR

Cada una de las tres funciones más generales puede ocurrir simultáneamente con las otras dos, y a su vez también con alguna o algunas de las funciones más específicas. (Para ejemplos y análisis de cada función ver puntos 9.4.1 y 9.4.2 en la tesis).

9.2 Resultados del análisis cuantitativo y conclusiones

Los resultados del conteo de frecuencias para las tres funciones generales ubican a la evaluación como la de mayor frecuencia de ocurrencia. Así, parece ser que la ironía verbal tiene, en la mayoría de los casos, como función primordial la evaluación de alguien o algo. Efectivamente, no es difícil ver que tanto la Ironía Positiva como la Negativa cumplen una función evaluativa. El bajo porcentaje de casos de ironía verbal no evaluativa corresponde a las instancias de Ironía Neutral, que, como se explicó anteriormente, no muestran ninguna actitud en particular por parte del hablante.

El número de ocurrencias de estas tres funciones generales cambia según se considere, en los corpus que contienen episodios de series televisivas, las intenciones del autor o escritor de los episodios o las intenciones de los personajes dentro de la trama de cada episodio. En efecto, si consideramos las intenciones del autor, todos los casos de ironía verbal cumplen la función general de divertir a la audiencia; mientras que si consideramos las intenciones de los personajes, esos casos

se convierten casi en su totalidad en casos de ironía cumpliendo la función de evaluación y/o ataque verbal. (Ver tablas y gráficos de resultados en págs. 525 a 531 de la tesis en inglés). Se observa que estas funciones tienen una relación con en el tipo de discurso empleado, es decir, que el género o tipo de discurso influye en la función que la ironía cumple.

Las tres funciones generales pueden ser cumplidas por discurso que contenga Ironía Negativa. Tanto el divertimento como la evaluación pueden ser funciones cumplidas por la Ironía Positiva, pero ésta no puede, obviamente, cumplir la función de ataque verbal. Ni el ataque verbal ni la evaluación pueden ser funciones de la Ironía Neutral, siendo la función de divertimento la única observada para este tipo de ironía. Esto nos permite establecer una correlación entre las estrategias usadas por el hablante y las funciones generales cumplidas por ellas, la cual se ilustra en el siguiente cuadro:

FUNCIONES	ESTRATEGIAS
DIVERTIMIENTO	A, B y/o C
EVALUACION	A y/o B
ATAQUE VERBAL	A (solamente)

De las funciones más específicas, el cierre del tópico,

la conclusión del tópico y el comentario del tópico resultaron ser las mas frecuentes en términos generales. La queja, el gastar bromas a alguien y el reproche siguen en importancia (ver figuras en págs. 539, 541 y 545 en tesis en inglés). Estos datos permiten al investigador asociar a la ironía verbal con ciertas funciones muy importantes de la organización del discurso.

Algunas de estas funciones, tales como el comentario del tópico, la introducción de un tópico, o la queja, muestran una mayor frecuencia de ocurrencia en los corpus escritos; otras, como la manifestación de incredulidad, el gastar bromas, o el rompimiento de la estructura de turnos predominante, muestran una marcada tendencia a ocurrir en el discurso hablado. Los resultados de la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada aplicada a los datos numéricos muestran que, tal como se esperaba, las frecuencias de ocurrencia de las diferentes funciones generales y específicas son diferentes para los corpus hablados y los escritos (ver Apéndice 4, hipótesis 13a y b), lo cual es un argumento a favor de la influencia del tipo de discurso sobre la función a cumplir.

Si bien muchas de las funciones específicas pueden ocurrir simultáneamente, existen ciertas restricciones (como se mostró en el caso de las tres funciones generales). Así, por ejemplo, la manifestación de admiración y respeto por el interlocutor no puede ir junto con la queja, dado que la primera es una función típica de la Ironía Verbal Positiva.

Se espera que este capítulo haya servido para completar la visión pragmática de la ironía verbal que se pretende dar en este estudio, y para complementar los análisis hechos en capítulos anteriores. En el próximo capítulo se presenta un resumen de las conclusiones de todo el estudio.

CAPITULO 10: CONCLUSIONES

Este capítulo tiene dos objetivos principales: 1) presentar las conclusiones generales, centrándose en las hipótesis de investigación, y 2) dar algunas sugerencias, basadas en el presente estudio, para futuras líneas de investigación en el tema de la ironía verbal.

10.1 Conclusiones generales

- Después de analizar algunos de los enfoques tradicionales o clásicos, se mostró que, si bien muchos de los ejemplos del corpus podían enmarcarse dentro de tales enfoques, muchos otros no podían, por lo que se concluyó que existe, además de un tipo proposicional de ironía verbal, un tipo no proposicional, que no puede explicarse con el argumento de la proposición contraria a la expresada por la proposición literal de la emisión de un hablante. Los datos cuantitativos y la prueba estadística de la Mediana sirvieron para la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación n° 1, pues la frecuencia de ocurrencia de los casos no proposicionales resultó ser mayor a la de los casos proposicionales. Así, el uso de una proposición contraria a la significada se considera en este estudio como tan sólo una más de las posibles estrategias pragmáticas que los hablantes tienen a su disposición para la expresión de significados irónicos.

- Considerando a la ironía verbal dentro de enfoques pragmáticos como el de Grice, se dedujo del análisis que, si bien la mayoría de los casos eran del tipo conversacional (es decir, que requieren el uso de implicaturas conversacionales), existen casos en los que no es necesario elaborar tales implicaturas, sea porque son casos llamados aquí "convencionalizados", o porque son casos que sólo necesitan de implicaturas convencionales para su correcta interpretación como mensaje irónico. Estos últimos serían ejemplos de lo que yo he llamado ironía "libre de implicaturas". Los resultados confirmaron la existencia de estos tres tipos (Hipótesis de investigación nº 2), y la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada comprobó que las diferencias en la frecuencia de ocurrencia de estos tres tipos (conversacional, convencionalizado y libre de implicaturas) es significativa. No hay duda sobre el papel predominante de la ironía conversacional.

- El número considerable de ejemplos en los que se encontró que la ironía verbal se basaba en una oposición de actos ilocucionarios se ha tomado como evidencia para aceptar la Hipótesis de investigación nº 3 (que afirma que la ironía se puede manifestar a nivel del acto ilocucionario). El análisis al respecto también arrojó datos acerca de la posibilidad de la ironía verbal de ser manifestada a través de actos de habla del tipo declarativo, contrariamente a lo que argumenta Haverkate (1990), y con ello se puede aceptar la segunda parte de la Hipótesis nº 3. Los resultados de la prueba de la Chi-cuadrada muestran que la frecuencia de ocurrencia de los casos

ilocucionarios de ironía verbal es diferente para los corpus escritos y los hablados: la ironía ilocucionaria parece ser más frecuente en el discurso hablado que en el escrito.

- En lo que concierne a la pregunta de investigación y a la Hipótesis nº 4, el análisis nos dice que, si bien existen muchos casos de ironía que pueden catalogarse como ecóicos, hay aún un número más grande de casos que no pueden ser catalogados de tal manera. Por tanto, el hacer eco de las opiniones, palabras o ideas de una persona se considera en este estudio como una estrategia más de las usadas por los hablantes para expresar ironía. Los resultados de la prueba de la Chi-cuadrada muestran que la ironía ecóica es más frecuente dentro del discurso escrito y la no ecóica lo es más dentro del discurso hablado.

- También se vio en el análisis que no todos los casos de ironía verbal pueden catalogarse como de crítica o desprecio por algo o alguien. Si bien los ejemplos encontrados en el corpus son pocos, se consideran suficientes para aceptar la hipótesis nº 5, que está a favor de la existencia de dos tipos más de ironía (aparte de la Negativa de crítica), que son la Ironía Positiva y la Neutral. La prueba estadística de Kruskal Wallis nos dice que, obviamente, las diferencias entre las frecuencias de ocurrencia de los tres tipos de ironía son significativas, siendo sin duda la Ironía Negativa la clase con mayor frecuencia de ocurrencia.

- La respuesta encontrada para la pregunta de investigación nº 6 es que no todos los casos de ironía verbal pueden catalogarse

como casos de simulación, lo cual permite aceptar la hipótesis correspondiente (nº 6). Los datos cuantitativos muestran que los casos de no simulación son mayoritarios, y la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada confirma la superioridad, en términos de frecuencia de ocurrencia, de la ironía no simulada sobre la simulada.

- El análisis de los ejemplos de los corpus a la luz de la Teoría de la Cortesía condujo a la comprobación de que en muchos casos de ironía no puede decirse que se esté violando la Maxima de Calidad, y se vio que muchos de ellos violaban alguna de las otras tres máximas, o más de una simultáneamente. Esto permite la aceptación de la Hipótesis de investigación nº 7. También se analizaron ciertos ejemplos que condujeron a deducir que, contrariamente a lo afirmado por Brown y Levinson (1987), algunos casos de ironía verbal se manifiestan a través de estrategias abiertas (on record). A veces el hablante usa sólo las abiertas, otras veces combina estrategias abiertas y encubiertas, y en otras ocasiones combina dos o más de las estrategias catalogadas como encubiertas por estos autores. Este análisis sirvió para aceptar las Hipótesis de investigación nº 8 y 9. La prueba de la Chi-cuadrada sirvió para ver que la frecuencia de ocurrencia de la ironía abierta y la encubierta es similar en todos los corpus, siendo siempre mayoritaria la ironía encubierta. También dentro de la Teoría de la Cortesía, se analizó la posible incidencia de las variables sociológicas P, D y R sobre el uso o no uso de la ironía verbal. Si bien no se obtuvieron datos

cuantitativos, el análisis cualitativo permitió apreciar que dichas variables sí influyen en el uso de la ironía verbal (Hipótesis de investigación nº 10), y que la combinación o fórmula para estas variables no es fija para todos los casos de ironía, y depende de la incidencia de otras variables de la situación y el contexto que no son consideradas por la Teoría de la Cortesía.

- El análisis de los rasgos prosódicos hecho en el capítulo 6 mostró que, tal como se afirma en la Hipótesis de investigación nº 11, no se puede hablar de una entonación específica para los enunciados irónicos: todos los tonos se pueden usar tanto en el discurso irónico como en el no irónico. Sin embargo, los resultados de la prueba estadística de la Chi-cuadrada muestran que la distribución de los tonos en el discurso irónico no es la misma que la del discurso no irónico. En ambos tipos de discurso los tonos más frecuentemente usados son el desdendente y el descendente-ascendente, pero este último tiene una frecuencia mucho más alta en el discurso irónico. Otros rasgos prosódicos que se analizaron como marcadores de ironía verbal son la acentuación en palabras claves, la alta intensidad en las palabras claves, la risa, y los silencios o pausas situados estratégicamente en el discurso. Los primeros tres rasgos probaron tener una frecuencia de ocurrencia relativamente alta; las pausas o silencios, sin embargo, presentaron una frecuencia considerablemente baja.

- En cuanto a la pregunta de investigación nº 12, acerca de las

estrategias usadas por los hablantes del inglés para expresar significados irónicos, luego del análisis de todos los ejemplos de los corpus, se encontraron 31 estrategias para la Ironía Negativa, 7 para la Ironía Positiva y 11 para la Neutral. Estos números no pretenden ser definitivos, pues es de esperar que, analizando otros corpus, puedan encontrarse otras estrategias no halladas en los estudiados aquí. Las estrategias que, luego del análisis cuantitativo de frecuencias, resultaron ser más usadas son: A11 (Haz eco de las palabras, los pensamientos o las ideas de alguien), A12 (Simula), A1 (Usa la proposición opuesta a la que intentas transmitir), A10 (Usa actos ilocucionarios contradictorios), A31 (Usa la ironía libre de implicaturas) y A16 (Evita los niveles más bajos en una crítica). Algunas de estas estrategias reflejan los argumentos de algunas de las teorías sobre la ironía verbal discutidas como base de este estudio, pero otras no, lo cual se toma como evidencia a favor de la parte de la Hipótesis Principal que afirma que dichas teorías no explican el fenómeno en su totalidad. El estudio de las combinaciones de uso de dichas estrategias nos permitió ver cuáles son las combinaciones más usadas. Los resultados de la prueba de la Chi-cuadrada muestran que las diferencias de distribución de las diferentes sub-estrategias en los cinco diferentes corpus son significativas, es decir que, tal como se esperaba, la variable "tipo de discurso" afecta la elección, por parte del hablante, de una estrategia u otra.

- En cuanto a la pregunta e hipótesis finales, acerca de las

funciones discursivas de la ironía verbal, se encontró en el análisis que existen dos niveles: en un nivel más general, podemos hablar de tres funciones principales: *divertimento*, *evaluación* y *ataque verbal*; en un nivel más específico, se identificaron diecisiete funciones, entre las cuales las más frecuentes resultaron ser el *cierre del tópico*, la *conclusión del tópico*, y el *comentario del tópico*. La *queja*, el *gastar bromas al interlocutor* y el *reproche* siguen en importancia.

Se cree que el análisis hecho en toda la tesis muestra que el fenómeno de la ironía verbal puede ser explicado y descripto en términos de las estrategias pragmáticas y las funciones discursivas empleadas por sus usuarios (Hipótesis Principal). Se espera que este enfoque haya dado una visión más completa y generalizada del problema que la dada por enfoques anteriores.

10.2 Sugerencias para ulteriores investigaciones

Cualquier investigación puede ser mejorada, extendida o perfeccionada. En este estudio en particular, creo que hay ciertos aspectos que podrían ser perfeccionados, otros que podrían ser extendidos, y otros que podrían investigarse en un futuro por no haberse investigado aquí. Me refiero a lo siguiente:

- La tipología (cap. 7) y las taxonomías (caps. 8 y 9) propuestas

podrían ser más elaboradas y "pulidas" por medio del análisis de otros corpus distintos de los analizados en este estudio.

- Se podría hacer un estudio más detallado de las posibilidades de combinación de las diferentes estrategias pragmáticas y funciones discursivas, que arrojará más luz sobre las tendencias de la ironía verbal al respecto.

- También sería fructífero disponer de un corpus en el cual todos los rasgos prosódicos estuviesen marcados, de manera de poder investigar todas las variables de este tipo que acompañan a la ironía verbal (ya se especificó que, si bien el LONDON LUND CORPUS tiene marcados los rasgos prosódicos, hay rasgos como la *nasalización* o el *susurro*, que no fueron tomados en cuenta por sus autores).

- Sería también interesante hacer un análisis más detallado y cuidadoso de la influencia de las variables sociológicas P, D y R que el hecho en este estudio. En un estudio más detallado se podrían hacer, muy probablemente, correlaciones más precisas entre las estrategias usadas y las variables sociológicas que las afectan.

- Otro objetivo que, a mi juicio, sería de gran interés e importancia en relación con este estudio, es el de desarrollar un modelo computacional de la ironía verbal. Los datos obtenidos en este trabajo podrían servir como base para el futuro modelamiento del fenómeno. Se podrían también tomar como base trabajos anteriores como el de Littman y Mey (1991), en el cual se intenta dar las bases para el modelamiento de la ironía

situacional.

Este estudio de la ironía verbal de ninguna manera pretende ser definitivo o exhaustivo. Soy consciente del hecho de que todavía quedan muchas preguntas por ser contestadas, y de que a pesar de mis esfuerzos por caracterizar al fenómeno, continúa siendo un misterio hasta cierto punto. Pero también ésta es la razón por la cual el tema, en mi modesta opinión, es un tema fascinante. La ironía no es sólo un tema de interés lingüístico, lo es también de interés filosófico, porque la vida misma, en sí, es irónica. Estudiar la ironía, por tanto, puede ser muy reconfortante, pues puede ayudarnos a descubrir, o por lo menos a acariciar por un fugaz momento, algunos de los misterios de la vida.

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